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Marriage of Marie Antoinette

HISTORY SOCIETY

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HEATH'S

PICTURESQUE ANNUAL,

FOR 1839.

VERSAILLES.

The Mill.

The side of the Palace at Versailles.

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TO

HIS MAJESTY LOUIS PHILIPPE,

KING OF THE FRENCH,

THESE ILLUSTRATIONS OF VERSAILLES,

A ROYAL PALACE

CONVERTED BY HIS MAJESTY

INTO A GREAT NATIONAL MONUMENT,

ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY

DEDICATED

BY HIS MAJESTY'S MOST OBEDIENT,

HUMBLE SERVANT,

CHARLES HEATH.

ADVERTISEMENT.

It was thought that the history of Versailles could be best written, because best felt, by a Frenchman; and the English writer of the Picturesque Annual determined, on the present occasion, to act as a translator. It is due, however, to his author to state, that the translation is in many parts so free as to be hardly recognizable as such; and that he is himself answerable for the whole of that portion which relates to the present state of the palace.

The taste and patriotism of His Majesty, Louis Philippe, have rendered Versailles, within the last few years, the most remarkable monument of its kind in Europe; and it is hoped that the attempt now made to describe and illustrate it, will meet with the favour of travellers and the public.

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VERSAILLES.

CHAPTER I.

General view—Character of the picture—Poems of stone—Westminster Abbey—Cathedral of Cologne—Saint Peter's—The Escurial—Versailles—Before and after the Revolution—The empire—The Restoration—Louis Phillippe.

A COMPLETE view of Versailles is obtained from the heights of Satory. From this point a single glance may embrace the palace, the town, which it seems to draw in its wake, and the woods pressing in upon it on all sides. From the height of its solitary terrace, the palace, seated as if on a throne, and dominating the entire landscape, of which it is

the centre, appears to look proudly down upon the wavy lines of verdure that sink and swell at its feet.

There is nothing from one horizon to the other which has not been made expressly for it. Elsewhere, palaces are built to adorn towns: here, the town is but an adjunct of the palace. The houses seem to grovel before it. They are only there as a companion to its solitude, and that the palace windows, as they open upon every new morning, may look down on a prostrate people. But it was not enough to make a town the attendant of its majesty, nature herself has been forced into homage, and the very soil moulded into new forms at its caprice. The impress of slavery is everywhere—in the town and in the woods, in the moral and material world. And so also is the gloom of slavery, which hangs over the whole scene like an atmosphere, and mingles with the pride even of the haughty tyrant itself. A strange sadness seems to brood over the palace, while the interior is peopled with the shapes and shadows of memory. We pass on from grove to grove, from room to room, communing with the past, and feeling an irresistible melancholy stealing in and mingling with a not less irresistible admiration.

The water of the Swiss, which bathes the side of the heights of Satoiy, reflects the long architectural lines of the palace; seeming to slumber at the foot of the deserted monument, like one of those Alpine

lakes which watch in silence at the base of some tempest-riven summit. Storms as terrible, have before now shaken this abode of kings, and the thunders of revolution have struck the crown from its head!

The stairs of the orangery in front, which the reader will observe a little to the left in the plate, is the most imposing of the avenues to the palace. The colossal steps remain; but the great men who founded them, measuring their proportions by their own grandeur, are no more. The circumstances of life and society are changed. The genius of a new nation moves in new directions; and, already, this splendid monument, the stones of which are as yet hardly tinged by time, is nothing more than a tomb.

Solitude is a portion of the character of Versailles, and when it loses this, it becomes inconsistent. Before the late sumptuous repairs had recalled the crowd, the associations of history formed its embellishments, and these do not harmonize very well with the painting and gilding now superadded. The heroes of the past were the court of this haunted palace; and the lessons of time were delivered in the midst of silence to the hearts capable of feeling them. In the last century, a young man, brought up in the midst of philosophers, set out from France to study in the East the secret of the fall of empires. In our day he would have no need to go so far. Only ten miles from Paris there is a house still

entire, still fresh and youthful, where that knowledge may be learnt which Volney could only find among the ruins of Palmyra.

Before these repairs it was delightful to contemplate this forsaken palace, constructed for the men and things of other times. It bore the stamp of one of the most memorable epochs of our history. This epoch was still present in its stones, in its proportions, in its lines, in its whole architecture. You found yourself face to face with it at the bottom of the stairs, at the entrance of the galleries, at the threshold of the saloons, in the embrasures of the windows; not a step could you take in the labyrinth of rooms without meeting it full before you, always grand, always elegant. But the breathless silence of the place seemed to whisper to this noble phantom that it walked amidst phantoms; and that all the splendours it recalled had been long since withered by the breath of God.

A monument is a poem, and of a more noble and durable kind than those that are expressed in words. In the primitive times the bards struck their lyre under the tents, or before the huts, of our ancestors, and their voices transmitted the remembrance of heroic deeds, and high institutions. But as society progressed, men wrote the records of their history in stone, and thus produced a chronicle more laborious, but more lasting. Where are the epics of modern civilization? They cover the soil of Europe.

The prayers of the generation of the middle ages arose to heaven with the spires of their Gothic churches; and faith opened and expanded with that floral architecture which seemed to bear on high the hope and perfume of the soul. Thus, during four centuries catholicism inscribed itself in gigantic characters on the face of the earth; and from Canterbury to Nuremberg its genius shone in monuments which will render eternal the memory of its worship.

But when industry, by furnishing to the inhabitants of towns the means of throwing off the feudal yoke, had thus scattered the first seeds of modern policy, liberty, in her turn, desired to build her temples, and record her doctrines in that admirable language hitherto consecrated to the service of religion. Then arose the hôtels-de-ville of Flanders. Ghent, Ypres, Louvain, all produced edifices which rivalled the cathedrals themselves, and which still serve as monuments of municipal glory.

Then came in Europe the struggle of principles and peoples, of nations and ideas; and out of their wars of three centuries sprang the civilization we enjoy to-day. Monarchy was the conservative power of the epoch; and under its influence those great unities, and great contrasts still survived, which might otherwise have been lost in the general fusion. Kings, in their turn, inscribed their domination in letters of stone; and architecture, which had celebrated successively the triumphs of

religion and democracy, became now the epic of royalty—to be brought at length to a close by the French Revolution.

Among these epics in stone, there are some which bear peculiar marks of greatness and majesty. Westminster Abbey is in itself a summary of English history. The genius of the nation is stamped upon its architecture. The tombs of its kings are protected by the banners of the aristocracy; and near the chapel which contains them, the parliament, which has succeeded to the royal power, shelters itself within the walls of a cloister. Thus you see all England within the enclosures of the Abbey—the religion, the kings, the lords, and the commons, all reposing or stirring on the same spot; and the traditional ogive throws its respected arches at once over the dead and the living.

The cathedral of Cologne is the handsomest monument which Gothic art has consecrated to catholicism. All the grandeur, and all the reverie of German genius had concurred in the plan of this admirable work; but the voice of Luther, echoing throughout Germany, was heard at the unfinished porch of the cathedral, forbidding the spires to continue to mount, the vaults to close, the ogives to complete their bend. The workmen at the sound forsook their task never to resume it; leaving at the top of the tower a crane which will remain there till the end of time.

While Germany left on this edifice the traces of

its faith and its doubts, papacy united its whole strength to elevate in Rome a monument of its unchangeable power. It was obliged, however, to call in paganism to its assistance in the architecture of Saint Peter's; and thus to render manifest that strange alliance, against which Luther had hurled his moral thunders. The remarkable anomaly, however, was ingeniously and gracefully cloaked. St. Peter's is the cathedral at once of Rome, and of the world. Its architecture combines the styles of the great epochs of time; its walls might seem intended to contain the entire Christian population of the globe; and above this immense inclosure, it bears, like the Pope, the catholic crown. St. Peter's, in fact, is papacy itself—the papacy of the eighteenth century, tampering with the spirit of paganism, yet affecting universal supremacy; its brow encircled with the tiara, and its hands extended to clasp the world.

The Escurial, the expression of another great power, stands alone on the soil of Spain, which so many revolutions have ploughed without being able to fecundate. It represents the monarchy entrusted by Philip II. to the protection of the monarchical spirit. It is not a palace but a convent, where the apartments of the king were placed, side by side, with the cells of the monks. And is not this royal cloister a faithful image of Spanish theocracy? It seems as if the architect who drew the plan of the Escurial had been ordered, for the purpose of bring-

ing to mind, and sanctifying, the sacrificial terror of the Inquisition, to give the edifice the form of the gridiron of St. Lawrence!

All these monuments are the productions of individual genius—of the human instruments selected by God, to give its decreed form to the epoch. The cathedral and the palace are nothing more than temples wherein to lodge, like an idol, the leading thought of a single mind. But the man at length dies, and the idea is lost, or transferred, like the physical elements of his body. The monument, however, continues to exist—the cathedral and the palace still stand; and, as science explores the functions of life in lifeless forms, the philosopher studies in these now soulless fabrics the mysteries of the decrees of God. Such has been the fate of Saint Peter's, and the dream of Julius II.; of the Escurial, and the dream of Philip II.; and of Versailles, and the dream of Louis XIV!

Versailles is the expression of monarchy, as conceived by Louis XIV. It is the only epic produced in his reign—a reign so fertile in the other forms of poetry, and in talent of all kinds. What epic ever chronicled the destiny of an epoch in a manner more brilliant and complete? In this poem of stone the manners of heroic and familiar life mingle at every step. Beside the halls and galleries, the theatres of royal state, there are mysterious passages, and sequestered nooks, that whisper a thousand secret histories. The palace has two voices,

F. Mackenzie. J. T. Willmore.

Palace of Versailles

Western Façade, From the Gardens

London Published for the Proprietors by Longman & Co Paternoster Row

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one grave, and one gay and trifling. It has at once the depth of Tacitus, and the indiscretion of Suetonius. It is full of truths and fictions, tears and smiles; and joining the genius of Molière to that of Corneille, it brings in comic scenes after tragedies with marvellous rapidity. The personages of its drama are as various as life itself; kings, poets, ministers, courtiers, confessors; mistresses either acknowledged or not; queens without power, and queens with too much power; ambassadors, generals beaten and victorious, little abbés and great ladies; the sword and the gown, nobles, clergy, even the third estate, even the people; honour, baseness, genius, in all places rare, and virtue in such places as this rarer still; wit in abundance, folly in superabundance; vice, in fine, too courtly for shame, and scorning to pay even the homage of hypocrisy to virtue. For two centuries did this crowd continue to pass and repass over these marble floors, and under these gilded vaults; and every day its flood became more impetuous, every day it lost more and more of its reserve, and gave way more and more to its whims and passions, to its ardour and intoxication. And the palace heard all, saw all, spied all—the stealthiest motion, the softest whisper; and it has retained all it saw and heard, each action in its acted hour, each word in its place; and now that the things and persons of the epoch have passed away, it repeats all without reserve to those who interrogate it!

During the two centuries of absolute monarchy, nothing took place which Versailles did not either originate or answer. It was the arena of all modern policy. Every shot that was fired in Flanders, Germany, and Spain, awakened here an echo. Richelieu was here, the first statesman of the monarchy, and Necker, too, the last. French literature grovelled at the feet of Versailles, and in the next age it tried to overturn it. Our literary history is inscribed on its walls which received within them our great writers, from Molière to Beaumarchais. Art erected on purpose for Versailles those schools and systems whose influence is still felt in the present day. For Versailles Lebrun became a painter; Coysevox, a statuary; and Mansard, an architect. Versailles was the glass of fashion and the rule of manners; the fountain whence gallantry, taste, ton, and devotion welled out, and spread over the kingdom. But it was not France alone which depended upon Versailles. Foreign nations sent their representatives to this famous centre; the choice spirits of Europe came to visit it; and the most distant regions of Asia gave forth Ambassadors to compliment the king who had rivalled the magnificence and the despotism of the East.

The history of Versailles is the history of civilization for the last two centuries. This palace is one of the culminating points from which the view is lost in immense perspectives. As we see from the summit of the Alps the forests which hang on

their shoulder, the rivers which flow from their glaciers, the towns they cover with their shadow—so from Versailles may be seen the movement of manners, war, diplomacy, literature, arts, and energies that have agitated Europe for two hundred years. Placed in the balcony of Versailles, you behold the entire world from the throne of Louis XIV.

The Revolution opened a new era, and new prospects. It is at Paris the spectator would now require to place himself; but, notwithstanding, it is useful to preserve this wide view of the past, obtained from the palace of Louis XIV., beyond which was perceived France, great and glorious, and foreign nations full of respect for her name.

Napoleon, to whom the Revolution left the palace of Versailles almost a ruin, was not struck by the majesty of its associations. He knew not what to do with this immense habitation. In 1811, he inspected the apartments even in their minutest details; but when the laborious survey was finished, he was heard to regret that the Revolution had not entirely demolished the château of the great king. Still, he ordered repairs, and made Versailles a gilt palace, which he did not even inhabit. The Grand Trianon was his favorite; the graceful architecture of which, put him in mind of the Italy he loved, where his genius had first spread its eagle wings. This elegant palace replaced Malmaison after he forsook Josephine, and he frequently went there for

several days at a time. He adorned it with a library, chosen by himself, and composed of the best works in every language of Europe. The Petit Trianon he fitted up to receive Maria Louisa; who might have found there many a token to recall the fate of another Austrian archduchess, whose prosperity had a terrific close. Doubtless the name of Maria Antoinette disturbed more than once the repose which the empress came to seek in the same place where her aunt had endeavoured to hide with frivolous pleasures the abyss that yawned at her feet.

In 1815, the Bourbons were eager to hurry on the repairs commenced at Versailles. They desired not merely to honour the memory of the past, but to bring back, as it were, the past itself; and it may be imagined how many agreeable illusions the restoration of this palace would have presented to their minds. Louis XVIII., however, took care to place under his eyes, besides the pompous image of the ancient monarchy, some token of the days of his exile; and near the Orangery, on the brink of a basin of tranquil water, appeared a copy of the garden at Hartwell. Just as there was a piece of the English constitution in the charter, there was a little English garden in the great park of Versailles! The green sward of this delightful place is shaded here and there by well-placed foliage, and narrow alleys wander everywhere around, a stream of flowers seeming to follow their devious course.

The design of an English garden is highly favourable to reverie. The imagination, excited by the shadowy nooks that open as we advance, the play of the cross lights upon the paths, and the mingling of different colours, allows itself easily to be carried into the world of dreams. If Louis XVIII. ever seated himself under that foliage, with what were his thoughts busy? Did he comprehend (for in such a moment he would be impartial) that the absolute dominion of Louis XIV. was the cause of the proscription of his descendants—of a proscription again renewed in the present hour?

As to the new repairs of Louis Phillippe, their spirit is not that which presided over the construction of Louis XIV.; but they form a very remarkable sequel to the history of the palace, exhibiting at once the transitions of taste, and the change in the moral character of the age.

It would be as impossible in this century to restore life to the monument of Louis XIV., as it would be to renew his policy. The Empire made the attempt, but without even hope of success; and the Restoration experienced the same failure as in everything else it tried. No other government would succeed better. The dead are dead; and when God has once closed the tomb of the past, no efforts, however heroic, can raise again that sepulchral stone, and reanimate the dust it covers. The mind, however, can perform this miracle. The spectres of time appear to its invocations, and answer instruc-

tively to its questions. It follows the funeral of the mighty; and when the ancient grave-digger of the world has finished his job, it comes to watch and dream over the newly-strewed earth. In writing the epitaphs of the dead, it calls them again to life.

This power alone can do for Versailles what governments have vainly attempted. It will reconstruct the palace of Louis XIV., re-establishing it, stone by stone, story by story, year by year. It will reproduce the birth, rise, fall, and mortal extinction of the king; it will restore to him all the ornaments of his splendour, all the tokens of his power; the men who lived in his bosom, and were his organs; the events which took place by his will. For a monument is an animate being; it breathes, it wills, it acts, it performs deeds of good and evil; it developes its existence, extending or closing it like an intelligent creature. Wave then, sorceress, your magic wand, and give a living form to this phantom!

In 1633, La Fontaine was requested to write a description of the château and gardens which the superintendant Fouquet had just constructed at Vaux-le-Vicomte. Poetry accepted the invitation, and, enjoying still the illusions and fresh credulity of youth, it made a lavish use, for the satisfaction of the great lord who had invoked it, of the inventions authorized by mythology; it gave free scope to the imagination, and sought among the ancients the gayest symbols to describe a château which a great

catastrophe was soon to render desert. But, alas! the time is past for this graceful faëry, in the midst of which La Fontaine framed in so well his "Songe de Vaux." Such enchantments are forbidden; and rather than borrow wings to mount to the unknown world, we must henceforth stifle ourselves in this. A magician's wand! It would be better to take a traveller's staff.

CHAPTER II.

The heights of Satory—The first lords of Versailles—Legend of the melancholy man—Priory of Saint Julian—Religion—Feudality—Monarchy—Martial de Léoménie—Saint Bartholomew.

In looking down from the terrace upon the surrounding country, there is not a single object before us which has not been fashioned by art. The hand of man has meddled with everything; drawn, measured, transformed; imposed regular forms upon the heavings of the soil, and on the shadow of the trees, and the water of the pools. It seems as if nature, near the palace of the great King, had been obliged to submit to etiquette, and assume a court livery, of which it has not been despoiled, even by revolutions. At this moment, her sheets of water are as correctly lined, and her alleys as well pencilled, as if they were still in the habit of assisting at the *petit-lever*, or of looking on at the chase of the king.

There is, notwithstanding, one point at which the circle drawn around Louis XIV. by Lenotre is interrupted, in order to allow the eye to repose on a wood where the foliage spreads at liberty. The heights of Satory, even from the Orangery, describe on the horizon their simple and graceful lines; and insignificant as may be the trees by which they are crowned, we look on them with delight after admiring the charms imprisoned in the artificial groves of the park.

Louis had, perhaps, some private reason for preserving on this side the freedom of nature. The first constructions raised at Versailles, looked upon the woods of Satory. It was on these low and solitary ridges that the eye of the lords rested, who built their mansion on this spot, at the time when Hugh Capet founded his dynasty. Louis must have preserved with pleasure this outlet into the park, and he must have compared with pride the aspect of the eleventh century with that of his own, and the plainness of the cradle of his dynasty, with the pomp and grandeur which now surrounded it.

There was a time when nothing was heard at a certain hour of the evening in the valley of Versailles but the bells of the little priory of St. Julian ringing the Angelus; and at the sound, the wood-cutter binding his faggots in the forest knelt down at the edge of the path; the lord knelt down in his mansion. Very different voices since then were repeated by the echo of these solitudes!

Opened on all sides, the wildest passions found their way into this once peaceful domain; and these woods which at one time were not penetrated by a single footpath, became the centre of the world, whence radiated all the highways of Europe. The reign of silence was succeeded by shouts of revelry; and the worship of God, by the idolization of a man.

The feudal donjon of the lords of Versailles stood a little way above the priory of Saint Julian. The earliest of these lords of whom we find any mention was called Hugo de Versaliis, a contemporary of the first kings of the Capet dynasty. The mansion and the church were then built on the side of the same eminence, the former protecting the latter, and both dominating the solitary valley. Thus, on one hillock met at the same moment, the elements which at this epoch constituted society. Religion and feudality had established themselves in these woods, where bye and by, monarchy was to seat itself above them.

Towards the end of the eleventh century, the mansion was inhabited by a lord who, like the king who then reigned in Paris, was called Philippe. This lord was a reflective and melancholy man. Even his wife, whom the chronicles call Helvise, although of a gay and happy temper, could not dissipate the cloud that rested on his spirits. The world was at this time shaken by a universal and unforeseen convulsion; the east and the west were

in motion, and everywhere was heard the clang of arms; but nothing of the kind could rouse our melancholy man. The more loudly he heard from afar the tumult of battle, and the shock of nations, the more his heart recoiled within itself, impressed with the nothingness of life. Every day some new event was announced, which had changed the face of the world; but he was stedfast in the void and desolation of his feelings.

Philippe de Versaliis had only to put his foot out of his donjon, to hear that the dukes of Normandy, his neighbours, had conquered the throne of England, and divided the lands and gold of the vanquished among their partizans. Nor land nor gold had temptations for him. They could not allure him to such adventures beyond the sea; and he rode steadily on, plunged in his usual reverie.

A little farther, he met some young people hurrying along with shouts of joy. "It is in Ital," said they to him, "that fortune awaits the brave. The Normans will soon be masters of the north, as they are of the south; the descendants of Tancred of Harteville have chased the Greeks and Saracens from Apulia; they have founded a new kingdom in Sicily, the land of enchantments, and God and Count Roger will prosper those who come to their aid!" But the sun of Sicily had no attraction for him; he turned away his horse from this noisy company, and directed its head towards the Isle of France.

New clamours were speedily heard. Another company of young lords blocked up the way. "Hallo!" cried they, "what are you doing here, plodding your way so quietly through the bushes? Do you not know that Henry of Burgundy, the grandson of king Robert, set out to combat the Moors in Spain, and has already driven the infidels to the sea? Alphonso, king of Castile has given him the hand of his daughter, together with the lands he has conquered, and those he intends to conquer. Come with us, where a new kingdom is founding in Spain, and where battles and booty await us, worthy of the chivalry of France." But the only reply he made, was to quicken the pace of his horse, and push on towards the south.

In this quarter, he met not merely noble adventurers, but immense multitudes of all classes rushing to arms. Old and young, nobles and villeins, were mixed together in an almost innumerable crowd, pouring along in confused masses, with priests marching at their head, the cross in one hand, and a battle-mace in the other. The earth trembled beneath their steps, as they rushed onward with so fierce a faith as appeared irresistible. "It is the will of God!" cried they, "It is the will of God! Let the lords leave their donjons, the bourgeois their towns, the husbandmen their fields. The pope has ordered a crusade, and Peter the Hermit has preached it. Forward, to the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre!—to the battles of Christ, on

the spot where he died for us! Forward, to pour your blood on the path of his passion; to besiege the gate of the east which Mohammed holds shut against us; to return war into the bosom of Asia, whence it has come to us; and to reply to her threats with blows, from under which she will never rise again! Forward, over mountains, across seas, through empires, round the world! Let us dare all miseries, all fatigues, all deaths, to set free the place where our Saviour lay three days! It is the will of God! It is the will of God!" These cries resounded in his ears like thunder; but they had no power to dissipate the cloud which hung upon his spirit; and disengaging his horse from the masses of population which flowed on to inundate the east, he returned home, and shut himself up as gloomy and as absorbed as ever.

Hardly had he arrived, when the lords of the Isle of France who had not left the country, came to tell him "that there was a blow for him to strike, and a part to take in these events; that King Philippe having been excommunicated by the Pope, on account of his cupidity and debauchery, his patrimony might be righteously divided by the faithful; that disturbances had drawn away the royal adherents; and that, now, therefore, was the time to increase the power of the nobles at the expense of that of the king." He would listen no farther; but, refusing to enter into the league with his friends, he sent them away to revolt as they

thought proper without him; and, shutting himself up, gave directions that the door was not to be opened to any body.

Presently some one knocked, and he called out, without opening, to ask what he wanted. "The lords, your friends," replied a voice without, "demand your aid, for they are in pressing danger. The serfs have revolted, and the towns refuse to obey; the bourgeois are assembling, and shout for franchises. Will you see the rights of the nobles annihilated without striking a blow?"

"Tell my friends," replied Philippe, "that they must endure the revolt of the commons, since they have themselves revolted against their master." And having so said, he went to his wife, and spoke to her in these words:—"Everything I see saddens and depresses me more and more—justice does not exist among mankind: it belongs to God, and reigns with him in heaven." He printed a last kiss upon the lips of Helvise, gave rich donations to the priory of Saint Julian, and retired into the abbey of Marmoutiers in Tourraine, where he assumed the cowl. This is an odd legend, and if one had time, might serve very well for the text of a homily.

In the meantime, the population increased around the donjon of Versailles. Composed at first of the peasants necessary for the service of the lords, it gradually received many others attracted by the culture of the ground, or the riches of the woods.

The little priory of Saint Julian at length was found too small for the religious wants of the flock, and a parish church was founded. Thus, by degrees, a village grew at the foot of the donjon, which already, towards the close of the eleventh century, reckoned a good many hearths, extending over the southern side of the eminence, and looking towards the heights of Satory.

The clergy were at this epoch the proprietors of churches; and it happened that the priory and the cure had different masters. The cure, which held at first directly of the diocese of Paris, was ceded by Bishop Geoffry to the abbey of Marmoutiers. A century afterwards, under the reign of Philippe Auguste, the abbot of Saint Magloire of Paris made an exchange with him of Marmoutiers, which put the parish church of Versailles into his hands. The abbey of Saint Magloire held the property thus acquired till the sixteenth century; when it was itself united to the diocese of Paris, with all its dependencies.

During the whole time, the priors of Saint Julian had remained nearly absolute masters of the priory. They indeed paid some tribute to the diocese, but this was of little value, and intended merely as a token of their nominal vassalage. Thus they were obliged to furnish the church of Notre Dame at Paris, for the festival of the Assumption of the Virgin, with a measure of a kind of spiced wine which was used at the conclusion of great

repasts, and of which the canons of the cathedral, no doubt, drank liberally on the occasion of this solemnity. In consideration of this trifling tribute, they administered at their pleasure the revenues of the priory. Their independence at length rendered them very presumptuous; for, in the sixteenth century, when the cure of Versailles returned into the hands of the diocese of Paris, they pretended that they were the original incumbents, and as such, disputed the nomination with the bishop. In their turn, however, they submitted to the law of centralization, although among the last to yield. Louis XIII. had already destroyed the ancient mansion of the lords of Versailles, to give air to his château, when the priory of Versailles still enjoyed its privileges. Nay, it even preserved its liberty for some time in the neighbourhood of Louis XIV.! — but at length, in 1670, it was definitively united to the diocese of Paris.

In the sixteenth century, the abode of the lords of Versailles presented a very different aspect from that which it had offered in the time of Philippe de Versaliïs. It had seen the faith of the olden time decline; it had opened to new doctrines; and given shelter to spirits of an energy and independence formerly unknown. The world, too, was changed. The lapse of ages had introduced new ideas, new principles, and new powers. Religion no longer ordered crusades, and hurled the west upon the east — its despotic power had died in convulsions.

The breath of papacy no longer stirred the world, which now seemed to grow young again, under the new winds sweeping over the horizon, and carrying with them the old superstitions of men like the withered leaves of the forest. Reason, like earlier faith, had had her funeral piles, and her martyrs; but, although her neck was still under the axe, it might easily be seen that she was destined to be the future queen of the world. Awaiting the fulfilment of this high promise, a power presented itself to occupy her place, and to maintain order among men during the interregnum of all spiritual authorities. This power was monarchy. Humble and hidden in its origin, it had fattened itself on the misfortunes which had devastated the earth—during war on the spoils of enemies, during peace, on those of vassals; and, at length it ended by absorbing into its own being all the life that had been scattered over the surface of the soil, and concentrating the sovereignty in itself. Thus it increased every day in proportion as other powers declined, and soon it was to become the sole arbiter of the destinies of the people. In the meantime, entirely absorbed by the egotistical and atheistical idea of its own physical growth, it scarcely knew how to guide itself in the struggles between the spirit of the past and that of the future, which took place before its eyes. It vacillated between the two parties into which the world was divided, and would fain have destroyed both. But it was necessary that this indecision

should have an end; and the people waited with anxiety the determination of the crown.

Martial de Léoménie, who possessed the lordship of Versailles, was secretary of state, and registrar of the council in the reign of Charles IX. At his request, the king conceded several privileges to Versailles: in 1561, there were four fairs established, and a market permitted to be held every Thursday. Léoménie had not lessened his credit in manifesting his opinions. He was known to be connected with the reformed church; and was the friend of the young king of Navarre, in whom he, no doubt, foresaw that political genius which was one day to give monarchy the position it had sought in vain before him. Henry, guarded at the court of France, and narrowly watched, left Paris notwithstanding occasionally to chase the deer at Versailles; a sport which was, perhaps, only a pretext for his visits to the château, where he probably discussed with Léoménie the chances and projects of the future. Thus they prepared the advent of the Bourbons on the same spot where a hundred years later Louis XIV. erected the most striking image of their power.

There was at the same time, at the court of Charles IX., among the crowd of illustrious bandits that Catherine de Medicis had brought into France, an Italian, more envious, and more crafty, than the other companions of his fortunes: this was Gondi, maréchal de Retz. He knew how to give an ap-

pearance of disinterestedness to his ambition, and possessed in perfection the great art of hypocrisy. Not finding that court favour had yet done much for him, he laid himself out to seek the means of increasing it. The religious dissensions appeared to present an excellent opportunity, and he spared no trouble to envenom them. He had cast a longing eye upon the domains of the secretary of state, Léoménie; he had often calculated how much they would add to his fortune; and he eagerly desired some grand coup d'etat, or some public pillage, in which he might be able to appropriate to himself the beautiful lordship of Versailles he coveted so much. His measures were taken accordingly; and the satanic whispers he uttered in princely ears had for their burthen — "It is necessary to consolidate the unity of the kingdom, even by the sacrifice of the loftiest heads it contains!"

This bloody policy was to the taste of Catherine de Medicis. More moderate, more skilful than formerly, the queen-mother had tried to effect a union between the two churches; but the time for conciliation had passed by, and the factions which aspired to rule had played their part, in such a manner, that violence was absolutely necessary to obtain their end. Catherine did not wish to hold the second place in anything; and, in order to put herself on a level with the furies of the court, she had nothing more to do than to loose the bridle of

her Italian passions. When the maréchal de Retz proposed to cut the throats of one-half of France, he found her neither surprised nor terrified. It seemed to her nothing more than a means of enabling her to reign quietly over the other half.

In the night of the 24th of August 1572, the carrefours of Paris were suddenly invested by a multitude of soldiers, brandishing arms and torches. The protestants, alarmed, sprang from their beds, and ran to the Louvre, to inquire the cause of the tumult. They found the passage blocked up. Like a man who meditates a crime, the old passage remained dark, mute, and closed. The young king, who, according to his usual custom, had passed the whole evening in running through the rooms of the Louvre, whipping in their beds the lords and ladies of the court, had gone to bed fatigued. Suddenly comes Catherine, accompanied by her women, into her son's apartment, makes him leap up from his sleep, and to his demand of what is the matter, answers, that the Huguenots are advancing, armed, and in great force, to the Louvre. Birague, Tavanne, the dukes of Anjou and Nevers, who came running into the room, confirmed the news, and pressed him to avenge religion, and punish the enemies of the throne. In order not to appear cowardly, Charles became ferocious. He commanded the signal to be given; and at midnight the bell of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois rang the knell

of the protestants. The king himself, drunken with wine, sleep, and fury, went out into a balcony to take his part in the work of massacre.

Martial de Léoménie, one of the suspected persons, hearing the cries of his brethren, dying in their houses, and in the streets, in order to save his life, demanded shelter, in the name of old friendship, from Jean Tranchon, provost of Paris. The Maréchal de Retz, however, had foreseen the case, and concluded a bargain with Jean Tranchon, which, while it satisfied his cupidity, put his honour under cover. The provost told Léoménie that it would be easy to purchase with his lordship of Versailles the protection of a very powerful courtier; and, in the extremity of his danger, Léoménie signed the cession of his property to the maréchal. The provost then made his friend remark, that the latter could not remain in safety with him. The best way, he thought, would be to go to prison, where he would be under the safeguard of the state, and from which, of course, he would be speedily delivered. Léoménie consented; but when fairly shut up, he was told that he must prepare to die. He implored mercy, and offered as its price the office of Registrar of the Council, from which he had never been removed. This was agreed to: and they then cut his throat.

Four days after, on the 28th August, was celebrated at Versailles, the solemn festival of the venerated Saint Julian, patron of the place; and

on the occasion, Gondi, lord of Versailles, took his place under the canopy.

The history of Versailles touches upon all the great things of the past. We have met at its beginning with the legends of the middle ages; and, now, before going much farther, we find that beginning connected with the terrible tragedies which distinguish the modern era. The shade of Catherine de Medicis hovers over Versailles. She is there in her place, and should be well satisfied to find that women did not forget the traditions of her genius. For women became all-powerful in this palace of monarchy :—true sovereigns themselves, they constituted its principal glory, and brought about its most terrible fall.

The Palace of Versailles from the Paris Avenue

CHAPTER III.

REIGN OF LOUIS XIII.

View from the Paris Avenue—Architecture of the time of Louis XIV—Policy of Richelieu—The solitary huntsman—Site of Versailles—The King and the windmill—Château of Louis XIII—Day of the Dupes.

On entering Versailles by the Paris avenue, we see the palace on the summit of the horizon. The houses, scattered here and there, and concealed behind the trees of the great alley, appear less to form a town, than to accompany the monument raised beyond and above them. This monument stands majestically apart; its angles clearly defined, and the lofty lines of its architecture crowning the perspective, and closing it so completely, that we might say, it is here where heaven and earth meet —there is nothing beyond. So we find in certain valleys of the Alps an unexpected peak of the mountain, which from its solitary height, seems to tell the traveller who designs to advance, that he has arrived at the end of the world.

While approaching the Place d'Armes, where the town seems to sink at the rails of the château, we distinguish the different parts of which this imposing mass of building is composed. In the middle of these wings, leaning one on another, we observe a morçeau of singular architecture. In vain the neighbouring masses extend their circle around it: their great arms are unable to stifle it. Compared with them it is small, modest, shrunk; but it possesses a seriousness of character which attracts the eye more strongly than their high white walls. It gleams among them like a minute but valuable diamond enchased in a metal one can afford to lavish. This is the remains of the château built by Louis XIII. at Versailles.

Louis XIV. did not wish altogether to bury his father's dwelling; and the taste is worthy of commendation. Architecture is not intended to efface from the surface of the earth the traces of time, but on the contrary, to preserve and render them durable. It should be like the other arts, a correct expression of the historical life of nations; and, why then conceal the changes of taste? The eye loves to gaze upon a long train of years and forms inscribed upon the same monument.

Any one, no matter how little versed in the history of art, may recognize at once the château of Louis XIII. The architecture of the former half of the seventeenth century has not only a peculiar form, but it is, perhaps, the only one which pos-

sesses colour. The red bricks used in it confer a character altogether distinct and original.

An example presents itself, or, it may be said, a type of this architecture, in the Place Royale, where you no sooner enter than you find yourself face to face with the associates of Louis XIII. The inclosure formed by the old arcades of this square is like a magic circle. When you place your feet within it, the dead arise before you, in the costume they wore, and with the habits and expression of life. And these are not ordinary dead! They are the contemporaries of Corneille and Richelieu—the young people who applauded the Cid—the grandees sent by the cardinal to the scaffold—the witty and voluptuous women who prepared in their polite circles the advent of the renowned age and its literature.

The château built by Louis XIII. at Versailles, was nothing more than an abridgment of the Place Royale. It was, like it, made of red bricks; it did not heap story on story, but, like it, contented itself with a moderate elevation: still, unlike the model, it covered the soil of the court with a marble flooring. Louis XIV. did not entirely respect the harmony of this monument; for, in order to allow the eye to reach to the end of this marble court, he threw down the part of the edifice which formed its enclosure. Thus there remains no more of his father's château than a mutilated and incomplete

image: the central portion, and two wings which extend their arms, but can no longer join them.

Let us here recall a *proverbe* of the last century preserved by Saint Simon. Already, in the time, and in the world of the noble duke, analogies were traced between certain monuments and the character of the princes for whom they were constructed. Thus, said they, there are in Paris, three statues placed in the precise spots that suit them best:—that of Henri IV. on the Pont Neuf, in the midst of his people, whose happiness was his favourite dream—that of Louis XIII., in the Place Royale, among the gentlemen with whom he loved to be surrounded—and that of Louis XIV., in the Place des Victoires, in the midst of the tax-gatherers, who had become the necessary foundation of his throne.

Louis XIII., in fact, affected a great respect for the distinctions of blood and races; and it seems as if the architecture of his time breathes an air of old-fashioned gentility which has not otherwise survived him. After him, royalty imposed on all things its solemn and uniform livery; but in the monuments of his epoch we find the real aristocracy of the olden time, in their handsome appearance, yet without pomp or ostentation, a little squirish, no doubt, and smelling of the country-seat they had so lately quitted, but withal, full of urbanity and elegance, and, what is better still, with an air of frankness and decision.

It was not Richelieu's purpose, however, to preserve this aristocracy, and Richelieu at that time was absolute master. He had quite other plans in his head; and all his plans he well knew how to execute, sparing no means to realize them, neither the meanest, nor the greatest, nor the most cruel. He had come out of the middle of the crowd to organize the monarchy in spite of the king himself. Heir of the projects of Henri IV., he dreamed like him of extending the French domination, and imposing its protection upon Europe; but he comprehended that in order to render it formidable to the nations then distracted with war, it was necessary to concentrate its whole strength and resources. He desired, therefore, that the whole kingdom should have but one idea, and one life; and, to arrive at this consummation, he thought the surest way was to bring the kingdom to breathe only for one man. This theory once formed, it was his sole business to bring it into experiment; and what Richelieu made his business was sure to be accomplished. If a head presumed to raise itself high enough to overshadow the one which wore the crown, and which alone should be seen — that head was sure to fall from the shoulders. The blood which spouted on his red cassock could leave no trace; and neither did that which flowed in the red brick châteaux of the nobility.

But while Richelieu was founding the monarchy on the ruins of the aristocracy, what did the king?

The king amused himself with shedding blood of a less formidable, and less precious kind. As melancholy as if his conscience actually smarted for the necessary crimes of Richelieu, it was his custom to bury himself in the woods; the chace was his only diversion, and this he followed in the most shadowy and solitary places he could find; he scoured the forests under the guidance of chance, with as few dogs and attendants as possible; and thus, instead of the royal chace which became so famous afterwards, with its flourishes of music, its carriages, and its huntsmen, his hunting was like that of a country gentleman who wishes to pass his time c--ditably, and to return home too much fatigued to think of the cares of life.

On returning to Saint Germain in the evening, he met some young women, whose conversation smoothed his brow without touching his heart. His eye rested, indeed, with some little emotion, upon Mademoiselle de la Fayette, but he was still far from love; and, if he spoke to Mademoiselle de Hautefort, it was only of his hunting, his dogs, and his falcons. But it was always necessary to salute his mother, for whom he had no affection, and his wife, whom he cared nothing about; and to receive his ministers, whom he dreaded, and whose administration he authorized without approving: and soon Louis regretted having returned so early from the forest, and longed ardently for some retired home, where he might be able to

pass a quiet night between the evening's hunt and that of the morning.

One day, while following the chace, with his ennui for a companion, he reached a little isolated hill, at the foot of which the woods met that bordered the plain of Paris. Here were the woods of Gonards and Porchefontaines, connected with those of Meudon; there, the woods of Satory, extending to Rambouillet; on another side, those of Hubies —or Spectres and Loup-garous— sweeping towards Marly; a little farther, those of Fausses-Reposes, adjoining Ville d'Avray. From horizon to horizon, all was forest, intersected only by marshes, abounding in water-fowl. No regular routes traversed the wilderness. Some villages were scattered at the foot of the hills, but they were hidden by the foliage, and did not interrupt the stillness of this wild and dreary domain. Sèvres, which guarded the frontiers about two leagues off, had no bridge to open a passage to the traffic of Paris. The western highway went through Saint Cloud, and proceeded thence towards Brest, by Rauquencourt and Vaucresson. A branch from this road turned off towards Ville d'Avray, and went down to Montreuil, where it turned round the eminence which dominates the valley: but this route was only used for the cattle proceeding to the metropolitan market. The mournful bellowing of the oxen brought from the pastures of Normandy was thus the only sound

which mingled with the wailing of the wind as it swept along the ocean of trees.

The little hill standing in the midst seemed to be an excellent site for an abode raised to the genius of the chace, or of ennui; and Louis XIII., a devotee of both, was always glad to rest here for a while. But what were the habitations he found on this little hill of Versailles? First, we have seen, there was a church on the side of the hill; then the lord had built his mansion higher up; and now a mill crowned the whole. This last represented, beside the other two elements of society, plebeian industry, which was becoming more considerable every day; and its sails whirled round in the wind above the pennon of the château, and the spire of the church. When Louis did not choose to return the same night to Saint Germain, he preferred sleeping in the mill to demanding hospitality of the descendants of the Count de Retz, who had preserved the property of the château; and, at length, in 1624, he built under the shadow of its wings, a hunting-box, a portion of which is still seen in the Rue de la Pompe, at the corner of the avenue of Saint Cloud.

For three years the king inhabited this snuggery, the mill waving its arms listlessly before him, and looking as if it yawned. When desirous, therefore, of enjoying his ennui, he had a companion to speak to. Is there anything, in fact, more dull than a

windmill, anything which resembles more a melancholy man? There he stands twisting his arms in emptiness; or he keeps them crossed for whole days, giving the insects time to weave their nets; and then when he begins to stir again, you would think he does so merely to kill time. He perches himself on a bare hill top; and there he lives alone, naked, bald, and covered with dust. You see light through his body, misery in his lank face, an arid desert around him. Vegetation dies at his feet; and not a single bird flutters round his head. These two melancholy personages, the king and the mill, held long discourse together: they thought to get to the bottom of that great question of ennui, which Philippe de Versaliïs had agitated on the same spot some centuries before, and which many others will agitate before it is finally resolved.

But one day—it is hard to say what sudden jealousy took hold of Louis XIII.—he resolved to make away with this mill, which, in encouraging his ennui, appeared to interfere with the prerogative of his crown. Being alone on the throne of France, he desired to be alone in the ennui of Versailles. So he sent to Jean de Soisy, who possessed the property of the mill, and the ground on which it was built, to beg that he would sell them; and his request being complied with, he threw down the mill, and laid upon its ruins the foundation of the present château. When he had performed this great act of power, it is to be believed, that he

repented, and grieved for the mute confidant of his melancholy. He sought for a long time among the lords of his court, for some one to replace him; and at length he fell in with Cinq Mars. He now believed for a moment, that he might pour without fear, his griefs into a human bosom, and he was desirous that his favourite should build a house near the château, in the group which his courtiers had already formed around it. The jealousy of Richelieu, however, opposed an obstacle—it went indeed, as we know, to the last bounds of cruelty; for such was the fatality attached to Louis XIII., that during his minister's life, there was no surety for his friends, his wife, or even his mother.

The château which Louis XIII. constructed in 1627, formed a complete square, each side looking to one of the cardinal points. The four equal sides were terminated by four towers, the projection of which formed the sole interruption to the uniform line of the building. Each façade was one hundred and thirty-two feet long; and the one facing the east was furnished with arcades, and ornamented with a frontispiece: it supported an open terrace, and served to close the marble court.

At this period, small proportions, and near horizons were the fashion, and the taste is not to be despised. Neither did the ancients consider greatness to consist in an ambitious extent of lines and prospects. Behind the château, alleys were made in the woods which covered the declivity of the

hill; but this sort of natural garden did not occupy one-half of the park which has replaced it. At the farther extremity were arranged two groves, to one of which they gave the name of the Dauphin, in honour of the child of Anne of Austria, whom she brought into the world after twenty-three years' sterility. Such was the château of Louis XIII. In the same year when the building was commenced, Bassompierre took the liberty of saying of Versailles—when justifying the expense before an assembly of notables—"That it was a pitiful château which no private gentleman could be vain of." The time had not yet come when the "tiers" dared to examine the accounts of the crown.

The king was extremely fond of this place, where he went frequently to forget in solitude the yoke he could neither endure nor throw off. In the meantime, aristocracy was not so completely vanquished as not to be formidable still. The prisons and scaffolds of Richelieu were thought to be insufficient to protect the monarchy; and they surrounded the favourite retreat of Louis XIII. with a ditch, crossed by a drawbridge. This was not enough. The château of the Count de Retz still stood on the declivity of the hill; and, although it was at the foot of the royal abode, its near neighbourhood was considered inconvenient. Already its threshold had been touched by the foot of a headstrong and unquiet child, who was destined, by means of his unbridled passions, to overturn the political position of the

country, and carry royalty to the very brink of ruin! It was necessary to make away with a troublesome rival, who, with his long feudal associations, seemed to protest against the modern constructions of monarchy. Gold delivered this enemy into the hands of the king; and, by a contract dated the 8th April, 1632, and in consideration of sixty thousand livres, J. F. de Gondi, uncle of the famous Cardinal de Retz, sold his château to Louis XIII., who destroyed it so utterly that he left not one stone upon another.

But Richelieu, who was accustomed to see everything bend before his genius, once bent his own knee before the king on a decisive occasion; and the château of Versailles saw the real master of the destinies of France humble himself before the royal slave to whom he gave law.

Although women were the ornament of the court of Louis XIV., in that of his father they made only mischief. Marie de Medicis had drawn from Florence the same passion for intrigue which another queen had imported before; but what had been genius with Catherine, was nothing but confusion with Marie. Richelieu, besides, was a dangerous adversary; he had no respect for obstructions of any kind, either of feelings or circumstances,—and, perhaps, even he had some satisfaction in being forced to be ungrateful. Marie de Medicis had not penetrated far enough into the cardinal's character. She raised him without knowing him thoroughly;

and, after having introduced him into the government, finding that her authority suffered, she thought it would be as easy to turn him out as it had been to bring him in. Not succeeding in this by address, she had recourse to violence; and, in the king's presence, overwhelmed the minister with accusations and insults. Richelieu thought he could not stand against the storm. He demanded the king's permission to leave his service, and was not refused. The queen-mother remained in Paris, to receive the compliments and adulations of the court; and Louis retired to Versailles to consult his genius in the only place where it had ever spoken.

On the same night, the cardinal Lavalette intimated to Richelieu that he was desired to present himself at Versailles; and the latter took care they should not wait for him. But the more proud and confident was his soul, the more doubtful and submissive was his manner. He brought with him Boutillier, one of his colleagues, as if to keep him in countenance. Louis XIII. awaited him in the company of Saint-Symon, who had won his title of duke and peer in the sylvan wars of Versailles; and when the cardinal entered the king embraced him with a politeness not even now unmixed with fear. But Richelieu threw himself at his feet, demanded anew permission to retire; and when the king begged him to continue his services, began to shed tears, declaring that, "after what had passed, it was im-

possible for him to accept the honour of remaining longer with his majesty." The king then gave him the very order he desired; assigning him a lodging in the apartments of the Count de Soissons; and immediately measures were taken to punish the chiefs of the party who supported the queen-mother in her discontent. This day was called the Day of the Dupes, and in the end it had important results. Marie de Medicis expiated in exile the insults before which Richelieu had bent his head; and the minister, raising himself erect, in the face of all his enemies, established the monarchy so securely, that six years of revolt and civil war were unable to shake it.

CHAPTER IV.

ACCESSION OF LOUIS XIV.

The royal chase—Napoleon and Béranger—Anne of Austria and Mazarin—The Fronde—Death of Mazarin—The rival candidates for the ministry—Magnificent error of Fouquet—Punishment of the man who dared to give a finer fête than the king.

Louis XIV. in his youth came sometimes to hunt at the château his father had built; but his hunting bore little resemblance to that which had been seen by Versailles twenty years before. The new king did not lose the entire day in pursuing the game in company with a few intimate friends. He did not humble himself to common details, or compromise the serenity of his mind by vulgar cares or too much bodily fatigue. He did not plunge into unknown and trackless woods; he had no passion for the unforeseen, and no patience for obstacles of any kind. Neither did he give himself the trouble of turning out the quarry into the plain, or of beating the bushes when it had taken shelter in the

copse. These things were unworthy of him. If he hunted, it was not because he felt like his father the need of forgetting his ennui in excitement and fatigue: it was merely to show in that, as well as in other occupations, his magnificence and unchangeable grandeur—and so of an amusement he made a ceremony.

His hunting was the hunting of a king, not of an idle gentleman; and the king's hunting was like the *petit lever* of the king, a solemnity truly monarchical. Rare titles, especial honours, exclusive dignities, were necessary for admission to the field. His companions being considerable in number, and dressed with great punctilio, it was necessary to make roads through the forest that they might follow the chace with ease, and in regular order. The hounds were numerous, and well disciplined; and like soldiers in an army, received the king's orders through the mouths of intermediate officers.

As for the king himself, he arrived at the selected spot with the calmness of a general who takes his position in the field of battle after having arranged the plan of the day. He fixed not only the place where the stag should be run, but the place where he was to be killed. He arrived in a carriage at the field, and was received with a flourish of horns intended more for him than the stag. All was prepared before he mounted his horse; and he had only to wait for the starting of the chace, the intended victim being already before the dogs.

He had not to wait long, for the very beasts obeyed him. The ceremony of hunting was gone through, the stag brought down by the royal hand how and where it had been preconcerted; and then Louis, if satisfied with a single essay of his sovereignty over the denizens of the forest, returned to the château as tranquil, and as magnificent as when he set out. Everything had passed according as the royal will had pre-ordained; not the slightest breach had been perpetrated of the laws of etiquette; on returning to the palace, there was no occasion for the huntsmen to re-assume, as they crossed the threshold, the air of ceremony they had never laid aside; and, in saluting the court ladies, the king did not require to re-arrange the formal smile which had never ceased to play upon his lips. In the plate we see the royal hunt. It is a procession in pursuit of the stag, led on by Louis XIV. The horns are blown in concert, to the air of "God save the king;" even the horses of the courtiers know their allotted place; and the château, in the meantime, looks on stately, yet respectfully, while the heavens themselves, avoiding the vulgarity of too much light, gaze down upon the scene with that measured radiance which ought to grace the triumphs of a king.

Thus Louis carried into everything a spirit of regularity and pomp. He impressed the seal of royalty even upon the smallest details. Monarchy was in his eyes a religion, of which he was at once

the god and the priest; and, full of the idolatry, the most common of his actions appeared to him as something solemn and sacred.

Hunting, indeed, has always been an important affair with the kings of France. With them, it was a tradition of the old time, a recollection of the German forests, whence their ancestors came forth. One may easily imagine that Louis XIV. desired to commemorate by an especial ceremony this favorite exercise of the chiefs who led the Francs into the Gaulic territory. When the horns echoed around him, the horses neighed in reply, and the multitude of dogs threw themselves on all sides upon the stag, as it darted like an arrow through the bushes, and at length uttered a far and mortal cry of pain when struck by the royal bullet—he wandered back, no doubt, in thought, to the time when his predecessors hunted in the woods of Swabia, and congratulated himself on the pitch to which he had carried in practice the sublime dogma of monarchy.

The ceremonial of the royal chase, invented by Louis, has been since scrupulously observed by his successors. Napoleon himself, when he wished to establish monarchical despotism under a new name, submitted with puerile complaisance to this superannuated etiquette. One day, in the last years of the empire, on the occasion of a hunt in the Bois de Boulogne, a crowd assembled at the Porte Maillot, to which the huntsmen were seen to gallop.

Here a stag, faint and bleeding, got out of the shrubbery, and sunk down dead under a tree. He had been wounded in turning him out of the wood to put him in the emperor's way; for the rule of the royal chase was, that the creature should fall by the hand of the sovereign. But even death could not altogether baffle the greenwood laws of Louis XIV. The crowd were ranged by the valets in two parallel lines; Napoleon advanced gravely; and, with that hand which had traced the plan of so many battles, and signed so many glorious treaties, fired into the bowels of a dead beast! Among the spectators, there was a young man, then an obscure clerk in an office, but who afterwards became a great poet, and one of the loftiest of the political spirits of our era. This young man's name was Bérenger. He saw Napoleon there for the first time—and it was rather a singular occasion, to make the acquaintance of the hero of Aboukir and Marengo.

If the chase of Louis XIV. did not resemble that of his father, it was not altogether because the tastes of the two individuals were different. Besides this, the times were changed, and the progress of events had introduced great innovations into the manners and government of France. Between these two hunting epochs many important things had taken place. The people had tried to get up a revolution, and failed; and monarchy, of course, had turned the affair to its own profit.

Louis XIII. had followed Richelieu to the tomb, just as he had followed his living commands; leaving behind him two infant princes, and, to administer the government during the minority, a wife, who did not wait for the regency to show her caprice, and the way she understood power. Anne of Austria was brought up in the school of Marie de Medicis, who, having attached her from the first to her interest, had time to form her ideas and mould her character. A Spaniard could have no difficulty in comprehending an Italian; nay, she was likely to go still farther in her theory of absolute power. These two women accustomed themselves to look upon the kingdom of France as a house in which they were to command without obstacle or control. Indeed it is something uncommon to find a woman invested with authority who does not endeavour to carry it to the highest point she can attain: these apparently weak beings whom we think made to obey, become in general stronger and more imperious than we, whenever circumstances put the government into their hands.

It was the violence of Marie de Medicis which was the cause of her losing the power over her son, which she originally possessed; and Anne of Austria, who witnessed her disgrace, took warning by it, and controlled her ambition in order to ensure its triumph. She knew that Marie de Medicis had destroyed herself by trying to pull down Richelieu after having builded him up; and she conducted

herself accordingly to Mazarin who aspired to succeed him. At the very moment when the latter had become formidable to her by his power, and hateful by his hostility, and when thus he might have expected her deadliest enmity both as a woman and a princess, she courted his friendship, gave him her entire confidence, and finally ended by rendering the bonds between them so strong as to be almost indissoluble. Having thus strengthened her power by sharing it, she turned her attention to the means of following out the plans of Richelieu for the supremacy of royalty.

But the times had become difficult. All Europe was in flames. The reform which had agitated France in the last century now convulsed Germany, a country slow of motion, but terrible when moved. The war had lasted nearly thirty years; and still the fate of other nations, and the equilibrium of modern Europe hung upon these interminable battles. France was interested in taking an active part. Henry IV., who determined the political impulse of his age, had decided on mediating beyond the Rhine, and it was to stop his progress that the House of Austria sent Ravaillac to him. But Richelieu had not left his project incomplete; for he had taken care that French troops joined, against the House of Charles V., the attacks of the Saxons, and afterwards the invasion of the Swedes. All these German campaigns had emptied the coffers of the state, while negotiations and the several

wants of diplomacy had exhausted its credit. Mazarin, therefore, had a double and terrible task: he was to close the thirty years' war to the advantage of France, and at the same time repair the ruined finances of the country.

Other political questions rendered this problem more difficult. Holland had arranged her democracy in spite of Spain; England had proclaimed the republic, and put forth her hand and slain the Lord's anointed; in Naples, a fisherman had worn the purple on his vulgar shoulders for three days; the throne of Portugal had recovered itself, as if to serve as a counterpoise to Spanish despotism, which, at the commencement of the century still menaced all Europe with its dominion. A wild and daring spirit of liberty was abroad; and France could not remain wholly unmoved. The Fronde therefore broke out.

The Fronde was not merely a war of songs: it was an attempt at revolution, popular in its principle, which might have been important in its results, and which no one would have treated with ridicule if it had succeeded. It created strong excitement; threw out some extraordinary persons from the inert mass of society, and developed ideas which, though at first insinuated in disguise, for the sake of experiment, ended by being triumphant.

All the literature of the great age was steeped in these stormy elements; and hence that true knowledge of affairs and men which so eminently dis-

tinguish it. Larochefoucault, the author of the "Maximes," was one of the heroes of the Fronde; Pascal drew his inspiration from it; Molière began his career during its continuance, and was soon an admirable representation of its spirit; Saint-Evremond owed to it his liveliness, and his exile, Bussy-Rabutin the fire of his audacity, Madame de Sévigné the graces of her lively gossip, La Fontaine the freedom and depth of his reason. Corneille, who till then had painted the heroic personages of ancient and modern times learnt from it to dramatize the intrigues of the court, and to develop the spirit of political discussion. Boileau himself, who worked at that time with his master Patra, a zealous frondeur, derived from the troubles of the times a democratic feeling which was never entirely effaced, and which produced the epistle to Dangeau on "La Noblesse," a work almost as bold as the "Tartuffe." Thus the Fronde was an excellent school, which produced some of the greatest and most beautiful efforts of the national genius.

But in commemorating the men formed by the Fronde, we have forgotten one—Louis XIV.! The education of this prince was much neglected by his mother and the cardinal, and insurrection and civil war took charge of it. Obliged by tumult to fly from Paris, he saw the fate of his crown at the chance of battle, and monarchy at the very brink of destruction. At one moment he might have doubted whether his life was to end on the throne

or in exile; but the sword of Turenne decided the question at Gien, and re-opened the road to Paris, which Condé came to dispute. In the middle of these vicissitudes, he might have studied the government he was called upon to administer; but the only thing he learnt from such severe lessons was how to leave still greater dangers to his successors.

At an early period Louis showed himself jealous of the exercise of the royal authority. He vowed an implacable hatred, not only to the factions which had presumed to meddle with his prerogatives, but even to the great men who wished to become too illustrious in his service. After the dissensions of the nation were appeased, it became his study to render them impossible at court; and for this end, he thought it expedient to level everything before him —the people, the nobles, and the ministers. These last had made the monarchy what it was; they had built it up on the ruins of the aristocracy; and in their turn, they were now to be sacrificed to the same insatiable power. In Louis's idea, royalty was nothing, if the king was not everything; he could not think of there being any other necessary existence in the nation than his own; and when his deliberations on this important matter were complete, his pride broke forth in the memorable exclamation—"L'état c'est moi!"—"the state is myself!"

In the meantime, Mazarin, so long as he lived, possessed the title of prime minister, and at least

the appearance of supreme power. The treaty of the Pyrenées which he signed, and which conferred upon France among the European monarchies the rank of Spain under Charles V., rendered him to the last the undisputed arbiter of the government. But Louis was by no means easy under the burthen of gratitude which compelled him to this submission; and when the minister at last died, on the 9th March 1661, he exulted in the idea that he was now the sole and sovereign master. He immediately held a council with Fouquet, Letellier, and Lyonne, which lasted three days; and the queen-mother, who was not summoned to it, unable to dissemble her mortification, remarked aloud — "I always thought he would turn out ungrateful, and set up for himself!"

But the vacancy occasioned by the death of Mazarin was a prize not likely to be left without candidates. It was thought by many, that Louis's fancy for governing alone would not last long; and they looked to love as a solvent which would eventually prove fatal to all his high resolutions. There were two men, especially, whose ambition seemed to have some chance. One of these was already very powerful. He had done great service during the troubles of the Fronde; he had raised the credit of the state by compromising its wealth; he was superintendent-general of finances, and disposed of the treasury funds by his mere signature; he had, therefore, only one step to mount in order to attain

the height of his wishes; and it seemed clear that if any body was to succeed Mazarin at all, Fouquet must be the man.

But there had been in the office, and almost in the house of the late cardinal, an obscure man called Colbert, who having done some service, during the war of the Fronde — not to the state, but to his patron — was named the testamentary executor of Mazarin, and recommended by him to the king. He had no public title nor official responsibility; for he was one of those men who are satisfied with realizing their ideas under the name of others — a moderation extremely desirable to masters who are ambitious of the appearance of power. For the rest, he was cunning and reserved, as all men are whose genius is without boldness, and who know that they can only carry their projects by stooping and bending. Colbert had learnt dissimulation from Mazarin; he observed the ambition of Fouquet; considered well the character of the king, and "bided his time."

In the meantime Fouquet pondered upon the means of gaining the good graces of Louis, as he had formerly gained those of the queen-mother. He thought to succeed, by giving himself up more and more to that wasteful magnificence, the taste for which may be said to have been introduced by Anne of Austria. What could he do better to please a king of the temperament of Louis? He would surround him with all the seductions of let-

ters and the arts; himself the generous protector of that new literature which had succeeded the coteries of the hôtel Rambouillet, he could dispose of the best and most elegant of the spirits of the time; he could place at the feet of Louis the patronage of genius, and offer him the prospect of reaching posterity crowned with that poetical halo which encircles the brow of Pericles, Augustus, and Leo X. Had he not in his own character all the tastes and passions suitable for the minister of a king of twenty-three? Could he not be at once the servant and partaker, and share with him in all his luxuries and gallantries? One would think that Fouquet had been made on purpose for the situation he aspired to.

Fouquet was already in great favour; but he determined to reach at once the height of his fortune. This he would do by a coup d'eclat which would raise him suddenly above the rest of the world, and fix his position irrevocably in the first rank. His plan was in every respect conformable to his character: it was by a *fête* that this magnificent man resolved to decide his destiny. It was scarcely four months after the death of Mazarin, when he invited the king and the whole court to an entertainment at his château de Vaux. This château, which the superintendant had just built in the neighbourhood of Melun, at an expense of eighteen millions of francs, had so high a reputation for riches and elegance that it was said greatly to surpass both

Saint Germain and Fontainbleau. The gardens were the attempt of a young man called Lenotre, who promised to surpass in this department of taste even the Italians, who were hitherto supposed to have arrived at perfection. Never was there anything seen so majestic, or so nobly planned. As for the château, it was a mass of marbles, balustrades, and columns—a prodigy of luxury and originality. A painter, also a young man, recently arrived from Rome, and whose name was Charles Lebrun, had adorned the interior; and it was said that his pictures were destined to effect a revolution in art, and at length create a school of painting in France capable of competing with the best of those of foreign nations.

It was on the evening of the 17th August, 1661, that the court repaired to this château. The queen, being in an "interesting situation," was unavoidably absent; but the king, the queen-mother, Monsieur, Madame, and many princes and lords were among the company. The party at first visited the gardens, and the court was charmed with the pieces of water laid out in every agreeable variety of form. Louis, too, appeared to share the general satisfaction; and he stopped sometimes to look at the arms of Fouquet. But at every turn he made the same symbolical picture was before him; and his eye at length seemed to be attracted by fascination to the eternal squirrel, and in the midst of the delighted exclamations of the courtiers, he stopped again and

again, in spite himself, to read the motto, "*Quo non ascendam!*" The king fell into a reverie; from which, however, he had the politeness to return, before it had lasted long enough to throw a damp upon the company greater than that of the brilliant drops scattered upon them by the cascades.

Among the scandal related of this party, it is said that Colbert told Louis, that their host had offered a present of two hundred thousand francs to Mademoiselle de La Vallière. Upon hearing this, the king immediately fell in love with the young lady—and was of course enraged at the insolence of Fouquet! Always polite, however, he gave no token of what was passing in his mind, but with an excellent grace partook of the supper, which was served after the promenade, Madame Fouquet doing the honours of the table to perfection. After the repast, he proceeded, with the serene countenance of majesty, to view a dramatic entertainment prepared in a temporary theatre at the end of a great colonnade of pines. The machinery on this occasion was constructed by Torelli; and Lebrun had condescended to paint the scenery himself.

The play was the "Facheux," written for this splendid evening, by Molière; and the prologue was the production of Pélesson, then employed in Fouquet's office. The whole met with great success, Menage pronouncing the comedy to be one of the best of Molière. The king was delighted; and, while complimenting the author, as M. de

Soyecourt, the greatest sportsman in France, happened to pass, his majesty added, "There is an original you have not yet copied!" Molière took the hint, and immediately set to work upon a new scene which he added to the play.

When the spectacle was over, the fireworks were the next exhibition, and were much admired. While the squibs hissed in the water, and the rockets rushed through the air, followed by a thousand sporting stars, La Fontaine, niched in a corner, was thinking of the pleasure he should have in writing a description of the fête to his friend Mancroix, who was then at Rome. He had already got together some of the verses he intended to stud here and there into his prose; and he prophesied for his beloved patron "a fortune which should weary fame." Suddenly the roll of the drum followed the noise of fireworks; for the king, having determined to return to Fontainbleau that night, his escort was ordered. Louis, however, exhibited nothing in his manner which could destroy the dream of La Fontaine; and before setting out, he invited Fouquet to join the tour which the court were about to make into Brittany.

And Fouquet did join the illustrious party; and was arrested at Nantes some days after, and transferred successively to Angers, Vincennes, and at last the Bastille. He was tried in parliament by a court composed of the relations and friends of Colbert. The suit went on for three years, and at

the end of that time, he was condemned to banishment. Neither the tears of Mademoiselle de La Vallière, nor the verses of La Fontaine, had the slightest effect upon the king. "If they doom him to death," said Louis, "he shall die." He found however, that the court did not go far enough to satisfy his vengeance; and he changed his sentence of exile into that of severe and perpetual imprisonment. Before being thus shut up from the world, Fouquet learnt, that the king had given orders that Versailles should be made to surpass, not only Vaux, but every palace in the world; that Lenotre had been engaged to design the gardens, and Lebrun to decorate the apartments; that they had already given unrivalled fêtes in this edifice, for which Molière had written comedies; and that, in fine, Louis XIV. had concentrated around his own person all that luxury of art and genius which the superintendant had been so unhappy, and so guilty, as to wish to share with him.

CHAPTER V.

MADEMOISELLE DE LA VALLIERE.

The hole in the wall—Olympe and Marie Mancini—Hateful gallantry of the king—The Bosquet—Bussy Rabutin—The pleasures of the enchanted island—Louis and Molière—Retirement of the duchess of La Valière.

THE love of Louis XIV. for Mademoiselle de La Vallière was at first kept secret; and this mystery was the cause of the frequent excursions he made to Versailles. On pretence of inspecting the progress of the constructions he had ordered, he stole away from the court, and repaired to the rendezvous he had given or received. Sometimes he prolonged his stay at this sad-looking château, now an enchanted palace to his imagination; and several times he spent there an entire season. The court at that time was neither numerous, nor on an easy footing; but Louis knew how to draw, even from their constraint, the means of being happy.

This may be said to have been Louis's first love;

but it was by no means his first gallantry. The old palace of Saint Germain might tell many a curious story on this point, but it is our present business to interrogate the walls of Versailles. While painting the character, however, of the prince, it is hardly possible to omit some allusion to the well known anecdote of the built-up door. By means of a certain aperture, contrived in the wall of the room, he was in the habit of pursuing his licentious intrigues; but one night, on stealing to the place, he was surprised and bewildered to find that all trace of the avenue had vanished, and that in feeling for the door his hands met nothing but a flat and solid substance. It was Madame de Navailles, lady of honour to the queen, who after taking council with her husband, had walled up the door which gave entrance to this midnight wolf; and had so been guilty of a crime, equivalent, at least to sacrilege, in the eyes of the king—interference with his royal will. The next day he sent to demand the resignation of all their offices, and banished them to Guyenne. This took place in June, 1664.

Two of Mazarin's nieces, Olympe and Marie Mancini, had before this captivated the heart of the king. Olympe was very beautiful, fair, tall, and a little haughty. According to a writer of the time, all the graces would have been united in her mouth; if that mouth, which was a little too close, had been large enough to contain them. Marie

had none of these advantages. She is described by Bussy Rabutin in these words:—"Ugly, stout, little, and with the air of a tavern-keeper, she had yet the mind of an angel, so that they who heard her forgot her plainness in delight!" Possessing great influence over the king, she formed his mind that had been left without cultivation; accustomed him to read, to think, and to feel; inspired him with a taste for literature, to which he had hitherto been a stranger; and acquired so great an empire over him that she was very near becoming queen. Policy, however, carried it over interest in the consideration of Mazarin; he sent away his niece, and demanded for his master the hand of the infanta Maria Theresa; which being obtained, completed the pacification of Europe, and opened a way for the descendants of Louis XIV. to the throne of Spain.

But this marriage of policy did not change the habits of the young king. On the contrary, his taste for gallantry increased; and at length he entered into an odious intrigue with his sister-in-law Henrietta of England, grand-daughter of Henri IV., and daughter of Charles I. Her husband, Monsieur (the Duke of Orleans), carried to the length of the most shameful debauchery that taste for pleasure which the blood of Anne of Austria had transmitted to her children. Henrietta, neglected by him, who should have watched over her, had no counterpoise in herself, derived either from nature

or education, against the influence of a voluptuous court; and soon, the only question was, how to conceal from the prying eyes of the queen-mother a crime which so many considerations concurred to aggravate. With this view, it was arranged that Louis, in order to explain his frequent visits to his sister-in-law, should pretend an attachment to one of her maids of honour.

One evening rather late, after a magnificent fête Louis was traversing the park of Fontainbleau, accompanied by Berenghen, when they saw four of Madame's maids of honour going towards a grove. They followed, and concealed themselves behind a tree, to hear their conversation, although they could not see their faces. The young ladies were exclaiming about the splendour of the ballet they had just seen, and dividing their admiration among the lords who had danced in it. One preferred the Marquis d'Alincourt, another M. d'Armagne, another M. de Guiche: they spoke of everybody but the royal eaves-dropper. One of the four, however, had not yet opened her lips; and when pressed by her companions to give an opinion, she replied with a sigh, "Alas, how is it possible to look at these men when the king is near them!"

"A man, then, must be a king in order to please you?"

"No," was the answer—"The crown adds nothing to the charms of his person, although it makes

them less dangerous. He would be too formidable were he not a king!" Louis did not see the speaker; but all night long her voice sounded in his ears. The next day he hastened to Madame. He observed among her maids of honour a noble, mild, and interesting countenance, and hoped secretly that it belonged to the owner of the voice. She spoke; and it may be conceived with what joy he found his hope realized. This young lady was called Louise Françoise de la Beaume Leblanc de La Vallière. She was born in Tourraine on the 6th Aug. 1644, of parents neither rich nor of high nobility. It was she whom the king chose to cover the court he paid to his sister-in-law.

Mademoiselle de La Vallière was not one of those perfect beauties whom one may admire without loving. She had a fine complexion, flaxen hair, blue eyes, an agreeable smile, and a look so tender, and yet so modest, that it gained the heart and the judgment at the same moment. These qualities were mingled with defects which only gave a certain poignancy to her graces. She was of the middle size; she halted in her walk; her mouth was too large, and she was marked with the small-pox. Her understanding was solid and well cultivated; but it appears that she gave herself no trouble about the ingenious refinements of thought which were fashionable at the time. Sincere, faithful, distant from everything like coquetry, she was

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Mad^e de La Vallière

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more employed in loving than in showing her love: and so she was entirely shut up in herself, and her passion — the only passion of her life.

Such was the woman who occupied the mind of Louis XIV. in the best years of his life. It was for her he adorned Versailles; it was she who was the soul of all the enchantments he lavished upon that fairy palace, now beginning to rise out of the earth. But like all sorceresses, this queen was invisible. Louis would at once have declared publicly his love, but he had first his mistress to gain. Tempted by her heart to yield, yet preferring honour to her passion, she quitted the court, and took refuge in a convent at Chaillot. But the king sought her out. "How little you care for those who love you!" said he, and La Vallière could only answer with her tears. In spite of her remonstrances, he tore her from this retreat, and led her back in triumph to Madame, whom he entreated to consider her for the future as a girl who was dearer to him than life. Vanquished at last, La Vallière refused even then to cover her weakness with the splendid titles by which Louis desired to publish his love. So far from glorying in her shame, she concealed more and more her happiness, which was constantly disturbed by remorse; and on one occasion, this singular woman — in the midst of a court where to be the king's mistress was reckoned a high and honourable distinction,—even ventured her life to hide her frailty.

She had removed to apartments, in order to

avoid the suspicions of the queen, whom she could never see without confusion ; and there, on the 2nd October, 1666, at midnight, she gave birth to her first child. As the middle of the next day approached, when the queen sometimes went in, on her way to mass, La Vallière was thrown into consternation. In the dilemma, she ordered her room to be ornamented with tube roses, orange-flowers, and other plants whose odour was supposed to be fatal to women in her situation. The queen entered, and being told that her maid of honour had been unwell through the night, approached the bed, in her perfumed petticoat, to inquire after her health. When the report, therefore, began to stir at court of what had really occurred, her majesty was the first to contradict it, affirming from her own knowledge, that the thing was impossible. The next day, La Vallière got out of bed, dressed herself, and received the queen both on her way to mass, and on her return.

But the modesty of La Vallière—or, as stern virtue would perhaps name it, her feeling of shame—was less spared than the shameless pride of the favourites who succeeded her. It happened, for her misfortune, that the Count Bussy Rabutin took it into his head to write of the loves of the court. The count, who would have found admirable employment for his talents at the head of an army, in the midst of the adventures of war, being condemned to the idleness of peace, sought other

dangers as acceptable to his audacious and restless spirit; and the amatory writings he produced were distinguished by an extreme boldness, which even went the length of introducing before the public the great intrigues of Louis and Mademoiselle de La Vallière. On this subject the book was not merely historical; the author would needs deal in irony; and he turned the truest and most reserved passion of the epoch into a military jest. The Bastille was the punishment of the author of "L'histoire amoureuse des Gaules," but it could not stifle the scandal raised by the book; and Louis, therefore, adopted the plan of legitimatizing it. He compelled Mademoiselle de La Vallière to live at the hôtel Biron, which he gave her; he bought her the estate of Vanjour in Touraine, and the barony of Saint Christophe in Anjou; he conferred on her the title of duchess; and recognized publicly their child, Mademoiselle de Blois. But all these honours, so far from reassuring her, only troubled her the more. "She was ashamed of being a mistress—of being a mother—of being a duchess," says Madame de Sévigné—"never shall we see the like of her again."

Louis derived from the love of Mademoiselle de La Vallière a chivalrous exaltation of character he had never before exhibited, and a passion for magnificence and grandeur which he never pushed further. It was for her he held a carrousel, or mimic tournament, at the court of the Tuileries,

which was prodigiously admired, and which lasted several days. But at Versailles, the entertainments surpassed every thing of the kind in this reign. Anne of Austria, Maria Theresa, and Henrietta, each attributed to herself the honour of these fêtes, which in reality were dedicated to a young girl whom love had set above them. The queen-mother exulted as she saw in her son this love of splendour and ostentatious gallantry, which she gave herself credit for introducing into France.

On Wednesday, the 7th of May, 1664, the court arrived at Versailles to the entertainments prepared; the idea of which was given by the Count de Saint-Aignon, although an Italian, called Vizarani, was associated with him in the concoction of the plan. The imagination of Ariosto, however, was to be at the expense of the whole; and, accordingly, Versailles, as if by magic, became the palace of Alcinous, and the lords of the court were transformed into paladins. The entertainments thus composed a sort of great dramatic poem, the performance of which occupied three days, the title being, "The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle."

The first act, or day, of this drama, presented a magnificent tournay. The lists were in a grove, where several alleys met; and were inclosed by lofty pallisades, entered by four porticos thirty-five feet high, and ornamented with festoons enriched with gold, and paintings of the royal arms. The ladies were seated under triumphal arches at the

sides. The King, in the costume of Roger, and blazing with diamonds, made his entrance, preceded by heralds, pages, and esquires, all richly equipped, and followed by ten knights, who were to dispute the prize with him. After this cavalcade appeared a colossal car, representing the chariot of the sun, surrounded by the ages of gold, silver, iron, and brass, the hours, and other characters. The most important of these mythological personages came, by turns, to recite to the queens certain verses which the president de Périguy, and Benserade, had made; and then the courses commenced, in which, it needs not be added, the King was always victorious. When night arrived, tables were placed by the divinities who surrounded the chariot of the sun; and Pan and Diana, advancing on a mountain, moved by concealed springs, set forth a splendid and exquisite collation. Behind the tables, on a temporary stage, a band of musicians played during the repast. Mademoiselle de La Vallière, on this occasion, was placed on the side where the queen-mother sat, and not far from her.

The amusements of the second day, got up also by enchantment, took place in other groves, nearer the spot where the whole was to terminate; so as each day they might advance closer to the lake where the palace of Alcinous was to appear, towards the end of the fête, in the middle of the water. The second day was chiefly distinguished by the representation of the "Princesse d'Elide;" and then

a play of Molière was introduced to serve as an interlude between the fairy extravaganzas played by the court of Louis XIV. The subject of the drama may be collected from what Euryale says, in the first scene, to his confidant Arbate.

Moi, vous blâmer, seigneur, des tendres mouvements
Où je vois qu'aujourd'hui penchent vos sentiments !
Le chagrin des vieux jours ne peut aigrir mon âme
Contre les doux transports de l'amoureuse flamme ;
Et bien que mon sort touche à ses derniers soleils,
Je dirai que l'amour sied bien à vos pareils :
Que ce tribut qu'on rend aux traits d'un beau visage
De la beauté d'une âme est un vrai témoignage,
Et qu'il est malaisé que, sans être amoureux,
Un jeune prince soit et grand et généreux.
C'est une qualité que j'aime en un monarque ;
La tendresse du cœur est une grande marque
Que d'un prince à votre âge on peut tout présumer
Dès qu'on voit que son âme est capable d'aimer.
Oui, cette passion, de toutes la plus belle,
Traîne dans son esprit cent vertus après elle ;
Aux nobles actions elle pousse les cœurs,
Et tous les grands héros ont senti ses ardeurs.

The allusion here is evident enough ; but it becomes still more so from the reply which Euryale makes to his confidant :—

Un bruit vient cependant à répandre à ma cour
Le célèbre mépris qu'elle fait de l'amour ;
On publie en tous lieux que son âme hautaine
Garde pour l'hyméné une invincible haine,
Et qu'un arc à la main, sur l'épaule un carquois,
Comme une autre Diane, elle hante les bois,
N'aime rien que la chasse, et de toute la Grèce
Fait soupirer en vain l'héroïque jeunesse.

This was not to be mistaken. Every body recognized in this portrait the virtue of Mademoiselle de La Vallière which, at the period alluded to, had not yet fallen, but had resisted for several years the seductions of royalty.

Molière was ambitious of representing himself in a comedy where he placed the King and his lady-love; and he accordingly took the character of a buffoon; and, that no one might doubt to whom it belonged, played it himself. But he took care to tell the court what sort of buffoon he was.

> Par son titre de fou tu crois bien le connoitre,
> Mais sache qu'il l'est moins qu'il ne le veut paraitre,
> Et que, malgré l'emploi qu'il exercise aujourd'hui,
> Il a plus de bon sens que tel qui rit de lui.

The third day of the fête was passed near the lake in which was raised the palace of Alcinuos. The weather was now unfavourable, and had almost spoiled, by a high wind, the expected entertainment. Almost in an instant, however, lofty tents, and wooden buildings, rose over the heads of the spectators, and the four thousand wax candles extinguished by the storm, were replaced by an immense number of torches and flambeaux of white wax. In the midst of this extraordinary illumination, the palace of Alcinous displayed its enchantments to the court, and ended by vomiting forth artificial fire-works, in which it was itself consumed.

The Pleasures of the Enchanted Isle ended here; but the King, desiring to prolong the fêtes, did not yet give his guests their congé. On the next day, which was Saturday, the 10th of May, they practised what was called running the *teste*, a new amusement imported from Germany. The lists were erected in the court of marble, and the queen herself provided the prize, which was a diamond rose. The ladies ascended a balcony; and, leaning upon the balustrades of gilded iron, which at that time surrounded the palace, they judged the field. The King was conqueror at the first assault; but he offered the same prize anew, which was competed for by the Marquis de Couslin, and the Marquis de Soyecourt, and gained by the former.

Sunday morning was passed in conversation, in which they talked of the deeds of the evening, and laid wagers for the next day. Then they went with the King to see the Menagerie, situated at one end of the park, in a place where Louis XIII. had brought up his sporting dogs and birds. In the evening there was a comedy performed,—"Les Facheux" of Molière,—which had been made famous by the fêtes of Vaux; and the court pronounced the scene of the chasseur to be the best, knowing that the King was the author of the suggestion.

On Monday, a great lottery was drawn by the ladies; after which, the bets of the evening before were decided by the *teste;* the duke de Saint-Aignon being the winner. In the evening, the

three first acts of the "Tartuffe" were played, Molière not having yet finished that comedy; and, although the court was entirely given up to gallantry, they criticised severely the poet's boldness. The verses, indeed, were thought very fine, and the scenes allowed to be admirably well managed; but Louis, in the midst of his praises, forbade Molière to represent the piece in public; since it was so difficult, as he observed, to distinguish between true and false devotees. Poor Molière! He had composed the "Princess d'Elide;" he had eulogized the prince, justifying his love, and making out his mistress a divinity; he had himself taken the part of a buffoon in the interlude, and all for the purpose of insinuating the "Tartuffe" into the good graces of the King. He saw, then, his trouble lost, and the humiliation to which he had submitted unavailing; still he was not discouraged, nor induced to abandon the principal work of his life and of his age; he reckoned upon his own tact and genius to triumph ultimately over the prejudices of the King.

Tuesday was employed in running the *teste*, the King, as usual, gaining the prize; and, in the evening, Molière represented the "Mariage Forcé," a comedie-ballet, in which his majesty had danced on the 29th of January in the same year. Thus Louis and Molière were the heroes of these fêtes. During the day, it was the King who attracted the admiration of his court, by his high air of nobility, his sumptuous disguises, his dresses of ceremony,

covered with gold and diamonds, his triumphs without contest, and all the splendours of his person and rank. But in the evening this majesty gave place to another. It set with the sun, to which the poets compared it without ceasing; and another rose above the horizon—for Molière then shone in his turn, and the radiance of genius exceeded that of power. Fate had placed these two men side by side; the king, who attempted to imprison society in an unchangeable form, and the poet, who sapped the foundations on which it rested—by the side of the absolute sovereign, the philosopher whose railleries propagated that liberty of thought which gives birth to political liberty.

Mademoiselle de La Vallière presided at the most brilliant epoch of the reign of Louis XIV. The remarkable display of luxury we have just witnessed was the expression of the highest state of greatness to which the monarchy arrived. Without disturbing the peace, the King had made all nations bow down before France. He had forced the King of Spain, and the Pope himself, to make reparation, and send their ministers to humble themselves before his throne. While waiting for some occasion to make a great and useful war, he was desirous of acquiring all the glory that peace can give; he allowed Colbert, therefore, to execute, under the royal name, all the plans he had invented for the internal prosperity of the nation; the finances were reformed, and taxation diminished;

encouragement was given to the arts, letters, and that elegant civilization of which France has always been the focus: two powers, hitherto almost unknown among us, were brought into being almost at once—the navy and manufacturing industry; the two seas were joined by the first canal; nature was subdued, in all directions, by the genius of man, and matter forced to become an instrument of intelligence.

Neither was the lustre of victory wanting at this epoch. The King was not satisfied with the position in which the treaty of Westphalia, and the peace of the Pyrenées, had left France; and he meditated the extension of her boundaries to the Rhine. Every thing was prepared to realize his project; and, in 1666, the death of Philip IV., King of Spain, gave the signal. He instantly invaded Flanders, and Franche-Comté, under pretext that they were due to him, as indemnifications for the dowry of Maria Theresa; commanding the army in person, with Turenne, Vauban, and Louvois, for lieutenants. Every thing was so well concerted that a single campaigne sufficed for the conquest of both these provinces: but Holland, seeing so formidable a power approach her frontier, sought for allies in the rest of Europe, and mediated in the war. Peace was signed at Aix-la-Chapelle, on the 2nd of May, 1668; Louis preserving Flanders, but delivering up Franche-Comté—after dismantling its fortifications, so as to be able

to reconquer it at any time. The war thus finished, he then built the hospital of Invalides for the soldiers it had mutilated, and so crowned his conquests by an admirable monument, which still speaks, from the height of its sparkling dome, of his glory and magnificence.

It was by these things that the lover of Mademoiselle de La Vallière manifested himself to Europe; but already his spirit turned towards other aspirations, towards pomp less elevated, a love less noble. The birth of the Count de Vermandois had destroyed the charms of La Vallière. Her face had become pale; and the melancholy which always lurked at the bottom of her heart, had now removed almost every trace of gaiety. The King, in the height of his triumphs, felt the want of sensations less tame; and he soon met, in a character more brilliant, emotions that ascended better with his fortune. La Vallière assisted, by her own want of suspicion, to give the King a new mistress, and her rival was chosen from among her own friends. She endured with great sweetness, first the coldness, then the inconstancy, and then the harshness of the King; for Louis showed, even to the woman he had loved so much, that cold cruelty of disposition of which he has left more than one example on record. He had a little spaniel called *Malice;* and, on one occasion, as he passed through the apartment of Mademoiselle de La Vallière to go into that of Madame de Montespan, he threw the

dog to his old favourite, saying, "There, madam, is your companion! Enough!"—and, without adding a word, he went on to his appointment with Madame de Montespan.

From 1669, when Madame de Montespan became the King's mistress, till April, 1674, La Vallière had the resolution to live with her. Luzan wished to marry her, and the duke de Longueville offered her his love; but she rejected both. A second time, in 1772, she took refuge in the convent at Chaillot; but Colbert recalled her by the King's order. She returned to court, and endured for two years longer the martyrdom that her rival and her conscience made her suffer; but, at last, disregarding every effort made to change her resolution, she retired to the Carmelites, and made her profession. It was her last fête, and, like the others, a splendid one. The court attended at the ceremony; the Queen herself gave her the veil, and Bossuet preached the sermon. Here she spent thirty-six years in the cloister, in the most severe penitence, and died, at length, on the 6th of June, 1710, at the age of sixty-five. She had two children by the King, Mademoiselle de Blois, who was married to the prince de Conti, and the Count de Vermandois, admiral of France, who was killed in Flanders at the age of sixteen. When Bossuet announced to La Vallière the death of her son, she exclaimed—"Why must I weep his death before I have finished mourning for his birth!"

CHAPTER VI.

MADAME DE MONTESPAN.

Progress of the palace—Athenais de Mortemart—Curious conduct of her husband—Insolence of the new favorite—The reign of passion—Embassy and death of Henrietta of England—Anecdotes—Mademoiselle de Fontanges—Ninon de l'Enclos—End of Madame de Montespan.

Louis XIV. continued to build at Versailles. He extended this sumptuous palace longitudinally, and adorned it with a partial magnificence, so as to render it worthy to lodge his monarchical idol—himself. Versailles, indeed, was the most cherished thought of his soul, the most personal, the most tenacious. He might be inconstant in love, but he was faithful to his palace; he dreamed of it, day and night; he decked it with the prodigality of passion, and never imagined that he had enriched it enough, or that he loved it too much.

The court was not of this way of thinking; it complained that Versailles was ungrateful, and called it "the undeserving favourite." Colbert was

more severe; he found fault with the money spent upon this minion, and presumed to insist with Louis that he was wrong to prefer it to the Louvre, which merited much more favour, and was, notwithstanding, neglected. The King allowed his court and ministers to talk, without interrupting his work. He continued to fashion the monumental vestment his Majesty would one day have need of, and to build, in stone, on the surface of the earth, another self, which would survive his mortal person, and hand down its remembrance to the most distant generations.

Of all the women who ever entered Versailles as sovereign mistresses, the Marchioness de Montespan was, beyond comparison, the most brilliant and haughty. She was tall; her features were perfectly regular; and her complexion dazzling: her quiet look, and *spirituel* air, corresponded with her character; and the energy of her mind was seen in the powerful genius of her beauty. She was full of contrasts, light, and yet haughty, and threw over all a voluptuous negligence. Her tastes were passions, her passions storms; all her sentiments went to delirium. She had every thing that was necessary for the rank she attained—a thousand fine qualities, and not one virtue. For the rest, she was of one of the most ancient families of France, and daughter of the Duke de Mortemart. She had appeared at court after the marriage of her eldest sister to the Marquis of Thiange, and under her protection. She

gave herself out at first to be of a very reserved temper, and is reported to have said to Mademoiselle de La Vallière, "If I were unhappy enough to have such a thing occur to me, I would hide myself for the rest of my days!"

Born in 1641, Athenais de Montemart was married in 1663 to the Marquis de Montespan, who had nothing in his character to satisfy her ardent imagination. The marquis had not, as yet, shown any taste but for play; and from this his marriage could not wean him. He passed his nights in the gaming-houses; leaving his wife to all the seductions to which her spirit, her youth, and the air of gallantry which was the atmosphere of the court, could expose her. Lauzan gained her heart; but, although he was in great favour, and one of the most daring boasters of the time, his love did not compromise too much the Marchioness de Montespan, who thus appeared to the King with the reputation of virtue.

The desire of shining, and an ambition of no common order, triumphing over her reserve, Madame de Montespan bewitched the King by her vivacity, at the very time when the sweetness of La Vallière began to become insipid; and, by addressing herself at once to his spirit and sensibility, she easily brought him under her yoke. La Vallière saw the whole of this management, received the order to resign, and obeyed. As for Lauzan, he, of course, retired discreetly before his master. But

the Marquis de Montespan allowed his tardy jealousy to burst forth. He began by beating his wife; and then presented himself at court in full mourning. To appear in this costume before the King, was altogether forbidden, but, out of respect for his wife, the ushers allowed him to enter. Louis demanded, in surprise, "for whom he was in mourning?" and he replied, "For my wife, sire." The King turned his back; and ordered him, soon after, to quit the court and Paris. It was Ash-Wednesday; and a wit remarked, that Lent having commenced, it was according to rule that they should have only tragi-comedy at court.

From that time the love of Louis XIV. for Madame de Montespan was a public thing. The apartments of the marchioness were close by those of the King; and it happened frequently, that on a signal from him, they both stole away from the circle of the queen. The favourite, in the meantime, took a great deal of trouble to conceal from every body, if not her love, yet the proofs of her weakness; and she invented in order to disguise her shape, those swelling robes under which the natural outline completely disappears. Her modesty, however, did not afterwards impose upon her very great sacrifices. Pride, stronger than love itself, destroyed its last remains—her boldness became insolence, she was cruel to La Vallière, and disrespectful to the Queen herself.

Every thing was changed in and around Louis; for it was not Mademoiselle de La Vallière alone who had yielded to Madame de Montespan. So long as La Vallière was beloved, Colbert had reigned triumphantly, and industry and the arts flourished around him. War, brief, fortunate, and glorious, had crowned this happy period with its triumphs. Molière had enlivened it with his genius, and his irresistible laugh accompanied it to the very conclusion. But the moment La Vallière fell into disgrace, Colbert lost his influence, and Molière died. There was an end of these three persons at one blow; and soon they were all three replaced by new authorities.

While the fierce passion of Madame de Montespan touched the heart, already *blazé*, of Louis, the violent character of Louvois conquered his mind. The marquis was as haughty as the female favourite; and the old blood of the parliamentarians, transmitted to him, pure and hot by his father, Le Tellier, was still more inflamed by his ambition. It was said of him, that every time he left the council he resembled a hyena, licking his bloody lips as he scented his approaching prey. His taste would have inclined him to war, even if the desire of rule had not driven him into it. He knew well that he could only destroy Colbert by rendering the war ministry more important than that of finance; and it was his leading project to inflame

the mania for conquest which tormented Louis, and to plunge him into that series of campaigns which terminated in his ruin.

Passion was the word at this epoch. In the theatre, it took the place of irony; and, after the comedies of Molière, which corrected manners, came the tragedies of Racine, to disturb and exaggerate them. Even the great Corneille submitted to the epidemic. In vain he tried to restore to the stage the heroic inspirations of his youth; his power had degenerated into rudeness. In 1760, he had the imprudence to enter the field where his young rival was accustomed to triumph; and to compose Bérénice at the request of Henrietta of England, who saw in the history of this queen the image of her own disgraceful loves.

Madame de Montespan and Louvois had so much in common between them, that they soon understood one another. The minister had his favorite, as well as his master. She was the wife of one of his clerks, Dufrénoi; and, by the aid of Madame de Montespan was introduced at court, and made a lady of the queen's chamber.

In the meantime, Louis meditated a renewal of the war against Holland, as the first step in a vast plan he had conceived for involving in the ruin of this power that of Protestantism itself, and the few remains of political liberty which still lingered in Europe. England, alone, could effectively oppose the design; and, before commencing

operations, he wished to make sure of the adherence of the king, Charles II., who, after the death of Cromwell, had re-ascended the perilous throne of his father, and carried into his kingdom the habits and ideas of the country in which his youth had been spent. He parodied on the opposite side of the channel the grandeur and taste of the court of France. The plan of Louis, therefore, was, to send an ambassador to him, who should awaken neither the suspicions of enemies, nor the jealousy of his English subjects; and his sister, Henrietta, was chosen as the bearer of the secret treaty.

The King set out from Paris, under the pretence of visiting the fortifications of Flanders, and the port of Dunkirk, which he had purchased from England, taking with him the whole court, and thus converting his journey into a kind of triumph. Madame de Montespan was, of course, one of the party; and sat in the royal carriage, side by side with Henrietta, and opposite Maria Theresa! The people, who crowded round this brilliant cortége wherever it passed, saluted the three queens with the same acclamations; and Louis, emboldened by the popular enthusiasm, granted guards to Madame de Montespan.

Arrived at Dunkirk, Henrietta was too near the court of England not to be tempted to visit the king, her brother; and an English fleet, no doubt, by pure accident, was close at hand for her transport. The princess took a tender leave of Louis,

and, with her eyes still filled with tears, threw herself on the neck of his queen, and held her in the embrace for a considerable time. The king put an end to the scene by saying, "The separation is not eternal; we shall meet again very soon;" and Henrietta, resuming her serenity, embarked, without thinking any more emotion necessary. The court had the politeness to remain in the port, so long as the signals of adieu were visible from the parting ship; and then, taking his wife by the arm with one hand, and his mistress by the other, Louis turned his face again towards Paris.

At the end of ten days, Henrietta returned to France, and presented to the king the treaty completed, to which he attached so much importance. He had no time, however, to express his gratitude. On Sunday, the 29th of June, 1670, was heard echoing in the palace of Saint Cloud, that cry which Bossuet will transmit to future ages,—"Madame is dying—Madame is dead!"

Even this event, however, did not interrupt the gallantries of the court, which had become licentious in the extreme. Gallantry had now taken the place of love; and, in like manner, diplomacy had succeeded to generous war. During the whole of this epoch a feverish want of emotion was felt, which resembled more the activity of intoxication than of strength.

In 1672, Louis recommenced the war; and, after enjoying, or suffering, as it happened, various vicis-

situdes of fortune, which there is no need to detail in the history of a palace, the treaty of Nimeguen, signed on the 5th February, 1679, enabled him to take breath.

During this eventful interval, Louis led a very unquiet life. He went back and forward continually between the army and his palace; and always found in his court a fire as fierce as that which ravaged the frontiers of his kingdom. The king's example gave authority to the disorders of the time; for even the art and beauty of Madame de Montespan, although she never actually lost the rank of favorite, were unable to preserve the fidelity of her royal lover. The anecdotes related of this period are hardly fit for our pages; although it must be confessed that they are much more proper to excite laughter and contempt than any serious feeling.

There was a certain Madame du Lude whom the king looked at, and talked to, so often both in going to and returning from mass, as to give not a little uneasiness to Madame de Montespan. The lady honoured with such notice made no scruple of going one day to visit her rival, for the purpose of seeing the king; but she had miscalculated sadly the temper of Montespan, who flew upon her like a tigress, and nearly strangled her. When the court soon after went to Fontainbleau, the relentless favorite gave Madame du Lude to understand that she was not to presume to be one of the party; and, at

length the latter was constrained to retire to Saint Mary's, of the faubourg Saint Germain, to do pennance for her ambition.

Madame de Montespan now fell sick, and the Countess de Guiche was ambitious of taking her place. But the latter, if not too innocent, was at least too inexperienced. She did not manage matters well; and on the recovery of the chief favorite was put aside again without ceremony. The courtiers had laid bets upon the question; and the backers of Madame de Guiche complained justly of her imprudence.

Madame de Montespan gained little by having excluded Madame du Lude from the Fontainbleau party; for Louis found the charms of Madame de Soubise just as poignant. The favorite, as usual, got into a passion, and the king condescended to dissemble; but one night Louis was missing, and all Versailles in an uproar. The queen had expected a visit from her unworthy lord, and being disappointed, caused both town and palace to be searched for him. All was in vain, however; Louis was not to be found, although the prudes and coquettes of the court were questioned alike. In the morning, when this important subject came on the tapis, Madame de Soubise mentioned broadly a certain lady as the cause of the temporary eclipse of royalty; and this lady finding the scandal bitter because unfounded, complained so broadly that the king himself was obliged to explain the nocturnal

mystery. Madame de Soubise, and no other, was the culprit. Louis, in his confessions, went a little into details which threw some light upon the manners of this voluptuous court. Madame de Soubise, it appears, as a sign that she consented to grant a rendezvous, wore emerald earrings; and Louis, to demand a tête à tête, put a diamond on his little finger. This lady was a good dissembler, and was more ambitious of the reality than the ensigns of power. She acquired a great empire over the king, and exercised it accordingly.

The next was Mademoiselle de Fontanges, who made a still deeper, if not a more durable impression upon Louis. She was presented by Madame de Montespan herself, who talked incessantly of a certain beautiful statue she had seen with Madame, the second wife of Monsieur. Mademoiselle de Fontanges, was, in fact, beautiful to perfection, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, but she was utterly destitute both of mind and feeling. Yet the king adored this marble figure; she became the declared mistress; delivered herself up entirely to the pride of her new fortune; swept past the queen without saluting her; returned to Madame de Montespan even greater insults than she received; spent a hundred thousand crowns a month, and was astonished when that was called extravagance. Her extravagance was encouraged by royal profusion, and her least caprices became the rule of the court. One day, in a hunting party, the wind

having disturbed her head-dress, she tied it with a ribbon, the bows of which fell over her brow. The king admiring the effect, requested that she should make no alteration during the whole day; and the next day all the ladies of the court wore *fontanges.* The most splendid fêtes, of which she was the goddess, succeeded each other rapidly; and the imagination of Quinault seemed too poor in enchantments and machinery to please her. But her career was as brief as it was brilliant. An unfortunate accouchement destroyed all her charms, which the love of the king did not survive for a moment; and a convent in the Rue Saint Jacques speedily received this queen of a moment.

Madame de Montespan, in the meantime, had the good sense to tolerate the infidelities she could not prevent. Her grand desire was rule; and it was only when forced to share this with another, that her rage broke forth without modesty or measure. She must be said, indeed, to have at least been free from dissimulation, the reigning vice of courts.

The king was at least wearied of the storms which she thought necessary to retain him; but still he could not hinder himself from returning every now and then to the yoke, seduced by her spirit and passion. If in the end, he abandoned her, it was because he fell in with a woman, ambitious enough to desire to fix him definitely, clear-sighted enough to perceive that it was not on mere

pleasure a durable fortune could be founded; and skilful enough to turn him all at once from his open and unbridled gallantry to a severe devotion. This woman was the widow of the burlesque poet, Scarron. It was owing to Madame de Montespan that she was able to approach the king at all; but to her own strong understanding she owed the rest of her fortune—a fortune that placed her without a rival in this palace, where we follow the traces of time. Already, she had acquired a great empire over the mind of the king; and at the time at which we have now arrived, towards 1680, when Louis abandoned himself to Mademoiselle de Fontanges through weakness, and returned to Madame de Montespan through habit, he was drawn to the side of Madame de Maintenon through taste. Madame de Montespan was speedily relieved of one rival by death, but the other was too many for her. All the brilliance of her spirit was as nothing before the solid reason and profound dissimulation of Scarron's widow.

Queen Maria Theresa, in the meantime, looked on at these debaucheries of her lord for twenty years, without complaining, and without being pitied. She rarely stirred out of her apartments, but to mix coldly in some cold ceremony. When told that Louis had taken a new mistress, she replied, that that was the old one's affair, and thought no more of the matter. She spoke little herself, and people spoke little of her; once only, she caused

some excitement at court: it was when she lay in of a little girl, as black as a moor, who was brought up in a convent from which she never stirred in her life. This odd circumstance was explained by the presence of a young negro in the Queen's suite, who had one day frightened his mistress!

At Paris, however, there was a place where all the gallantries of Louis were criticised with freedom and ridicule,—the drawing room of Ninon de l' Enclos, where the most secret mysteries of Versailles found an echo. The greatest ladies, and those of best reputation, came to inform Ninon of the new intrigues of the day, and Ninon did not allow one to pass. She was biting and audacious in her satire, tearing away every veil, and sparing nobody. Her witticisms were collected, repeated, hawked about everywhere. They amused the very court which had occasioned them, arriving even at the ears of Louis himself, who often asked what Ninon had said last? This was truly a singular epoch. The court was full of prelates who witnessed all these improprieties without uttering a word. Bossuet himself was silent—and the task of censuring the manners of the court was left in the hands of a courtezan!

The end of Madame de Montespan was very melancholy. Sometimes abandoned by the king, and sometimes received again into favour, she

became altogether a stranger to him towards 1680. She preserved, however, for several years, a high rank at Court, where she enjoyed the office of superintendent of the queen's household, which she had bought from Madame de Soissons. So long as she remained there, she retained a hope of regaining the king; but after being indifferent, she became importunate, and at last, her son, the Duke de Maine, the eldest of the children she had by the king, was employed to prevail upon her to retire. Still she gave some time to political intrigues, and entered into opposition with the Dauphine and the Jansenists, against the Jesuits and Madame de Maintenon: then she disappeared entirely.

Her life, however, though now obscure, was still passed in agitation. The troubles of remorse succeeded those of pleasure; the unquiet spirit of her sins was reflected in her repentance; she could not be alone a moment without shuddering; she slept constantly between two women, and never heard the word "death" pronounced without shrieking. If it thundered, she placed a little girl on her bosom, that the innocence of the child might protect her from the vengeance of heaven. At length she died on the 28th of May, 1707, at Bourbon, where she drank the waters every year. The Duke d'Antin was her only child by M. de Montespan, whom she had sought in vain to bend. By

the king she had eight children; six of whom survived, and where legitimated, in spite of the law. This remarkable woman may be said to have resembled the lightnings of summer, which are extinguished in the midst of the tempests they announce.

CHAPTER VII.

The royal infant—Exquisite policy of Madame de Maintenon—Her life and adventures—Scarron and his guests—Introduction of Madame de Maintenon to Louis—Madame de Suggere and Madame de Maintenant—The King fascinated by the widow—Pere La Chaise—Alliance between the Jesuit and favourite—Revocation of the Edict of Nantes—Marriage of the King and the widow—Intrigues—Grotto of Tethys—God and the King.

Louis XIV. had seen his family increase, and the tree of his dynasty flourish, as if for an ornament of the throne, and to overshadow the whole kingdom with its branches. On finishing the war, he married the dauphin, his only son by the queen, to the princes Christina Victoria, of Bavaria, daughter of the Elector Ferdinand, with the view of establishing an alliance in Germany, where he had so many enemies. In 1682, the Duke of Burgundy came of this marriage; and it was by the rejoicings consequent on the auspicious event that Louis opened and consecrated his palace now complete. He delighted in surrounding with ceremonies the cradle of this young prince; and the baby was

still in the midst of his first cries of pain when he was presented by his august grandfather with the cordon of the Holy Ghost. But to be magnificent was nothing, if that magnificence was not seen and acknowledged; and Louis, therefore, threw open the gates of his palace to the public, at certain hours. His dynasty seemed to grow young again in this splendid image of his power, and in the dawn of a prince who seemed come for the purpose of perpetuating it. But fortune, notwithstanding all her morals, could not conquer nature: the monarchy of Louis XIV. was still young, but the soul of the monarchy had grown old.

Madame de Maintenon, who had been long enough in the king's intimacy to be able to judge of his character, was able to take advantage of what she found in a mind almost worn out with voluptuous pleasures. Endowed with more than common understanding, and great pliability of character, she possessed all the resources by which fortunate accidents, as they are called, are controlled, and governed. She felt that Louis, arrived at the last stage of debauchery, wanted repose rather than excitement; and, proceeding on this theory, she soon began to please and satisfy that withered heart which could no longer be inflamed. She found, besides, in preaching moderation, that there still lingered at the bottom of his soul some traits of the devotee, which she at length developed with consummate skill.

Louis had not received from nature one of those capacious and unquiet minds which are anxious to get beyond the circle of ordinary beliefs. The religion he had been taught was intended rather to confine than to elevate; and its restraint had been felt even in his wildest profligacy. The feeling was increased by Bourdaloue, who, contrary to the usual custom, had been summoned ten times to preach before the court. Satiety, in fine, played no small part in changing the habits of the king; but, notwithstanding it must be said, that he was still more anxious to cloak his wanderings than to renounce them.

Madame de Maintenon possessed everything that was necessary to captivate this divided spirit. She had a great appearance of severity, but under all a quiet, natural, and even graceful mind. The court saw her full of fervour, and the abbé Gobelin, her confessor, affirmed that she had a most Christian soul. Indeed, she had several times resolved to retire from the world, and at an age too when she might still expect to figure with eclât; but, notwithstanding all this, she was the friend and pupil of Ninon de l'Enclos. She was scrupulous in her manners, and observed minutely all the forms of religion; but at the same time she loved the arts, even those which address themselves more immediately to the senses; and till the king's death the amusements at her house were plays and ballets, music every evening, and masquerades during the carnival.

She was exquisitely formed, and at the moment she gained the affections of the king, retained everything of beauty but its freshness. Her hands and arms were perfect, the lower part of her face singularly charming, her height majestic, her eyes so lively and brilliant that they spoke what she was going to say, and her smile so expressive that it repeated what she had said. Her face, in fine, was dazzlingly fair; and over all was thrown a kind of seduction which seemed a separate part of the charm. Voluptuousness was oddly mingled with her lofty reason. She had all the qualities which Epicurus teaches are necessary to the prudent and refined happiness he recommends to his disciples. She was complete mistress of herself whether under constraint or enjoyment She was capable of satisfying at the same time the king's inclination to devotion and to pleasure.

Her life is a romance composed of many extraordinary adventures. The following, though extracted from a work of fiction, in which she is made to relate her history to a goat-herd, while keeping her aunt's poultry, is correct in its facts.

"My family is one of the most ancient in the kingdom; but, as I presume, that you know little, and care less, about the antiquities of nobility, I shall merely mention, that my grandfather was Theodore Agrippe d'Aubigné, gentleman of the bedchamber to Henry IV.

My father, Constant d'Aubigné, having ruined

his fortune by the extravagances which gentlemen of high birth are so liable to run into, formed the design of retrieving it by one of the projects to which men of genius resort, when meaner spirits take to the highway. He determined to proceed to Carolina, in the new world, on a colonizing adventure; and, his merits being looked on with a jaundiced eye by his own court, he applied for assistance to the government of England. This being discovered, he was thrown into the prison of Trompette.

"In the prison of Trompette, my father, having nothing else to amuse himself with, fell in love with the daughter of the governor. Her family name was De Cardillac, and her father, the governor, was a gentleman of rank in the Bourdelois. By her assistance the prisoner escaped.

"He married her in the year 1627, and they at length fairly set out for Carolina. Things did not answer there so well as was expected, for men of noble families do not at once succeed in business; and in a few years they had the boldness to return to France, and were thrown into the prison of Niort, in Poitou. In that dungeon was I born, in 1635.

"I was a prisoner for almost the first four years of my life; for, although my mother might have enjoyed liberty had she chosen it, she yet preferred captivity with her husband. She suckled me herself—an act of attention in a woman of quality of which I am highly sensible. We at length ob-

tained our enlargement, and set out for the island of Martinique. On the way we were chased by an English frigate, and afterwards by a storm; but as I was destined to eat wild berries in a mask on the farm of Neuillant, and relate my history to a goat-boy, we arrived in safety at our destination. There, being left on the shore by the negligence of a servant, I was nearly devoured by a serpent; but if I tell everything I shall never have done.

"My father succeeded this time in his projects; for some men of noble families learn business in time. Everything prospered; our overseers were vigilant, and as my father was vigilant too, they were honest; our negroes worked hard, and, by the blessing of Heaven, their families increased so fast, that we had as many slaves as there was work for them to do. My mother now had time to educate her children, and tell them stories—a great happiness for me; for I learned that my grandfather, Theodore Agrippe d'Aubigné, had been a friend of Queen Jane d'Albret, and the King of Navarre, and afterwards gentleman of the bedchamber to the latter, when he became Henri Quatre. It was at this time I told my mother that I should like to be a queen. The expression was repeated to our neighbours when they came to eat capons and drink wine and sangaree, and every body thought it very extraordinary, and extraordinarily ominous.

"At last my father died, and as his expenses had been somewhat more liberal than his income, we

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found ourselves in great embarrassment. The affair was not now how to send me to Paris to be educated, and to see if there were not any kings in the market. My mother was obliged to go there herself to look after some old debts, leaving in the meantime, one of her children behind, as a pledge that she would return; and as boys are usually preferred to girls on a journey, even when the former have no idea of marrying queens, my brother went with her to France, and I remained in Martinique.

"I was placed under the charge of strangers; and these persons, unfortunately, had been accustomed to take charge of slaves. You would hardly suppose it; but the eyes that habitually rest on working negroes, become at last incapable of discovering the difference of colour between those and white people, unless reminded perpetually by the circumstances of wealth, rank, and consequence. I therefore, having none of these things to act as remembrances, sunk very soon into the condition of a slave. The ladies of the family more especially treated me with great harshness; but this is natural. The imaginations and habits of women are not only more easily, but more deeply impressible than those of men; and hence, in the colonies, where slaveholders are only tyrants, the fair sex is composed of incarnate fiends. I used to pity them when I saw the looks of hate, mingled with grotesque horror, with which my mistresses were

regarded; but for all my pity, I was obliged, one way or other, to get through my task. It would have been useless to complain, and folly to repine: remonstrances in such a case are answered with stripes or laughter, and sulkiness spoils the complexion.

"My mother, in the meantime, did not return, nor even write; and business becoming slack with my worthy hosts, they instituted a comparison between the profits accruing from my labour, and the loss sustained by my consumption. The balance proved to be against me, and they led me therefore, before the magistrate, to make their complaint. It was clear that my mother had given them the slip; and the case, they thought, was exceedingly hard, that the colony should be burdened with the maintenance of an individual who, from her complexion, could not legally be sold as a slave. It was determined, therefore, that I should be returned, in the manner of unsaleable goods; and a Madame de Montalembart, who was suspected to be some relation of my mother's, and whose address they fortunately knew, was fixed upon as the consignee.

"When I arrived at Paris, I was then just ten years of age. Madame de Montalembert was greatly surprised at receiving such a present. My dress and manners were so extraordinary, that I was shown to every body who visited the house, as a young savage just imported from the wilds of

Martinique; and if I had not speedily found my mother, I should certainly have run away, and taken my chance of the world. My mother was busy laying claim to the barony of Durmeau, and prosecuting the government for money lent by my grandfather, Theodore Agrippe d'Aubigne, (gentleman of the bedchamber,) to his master, when king of Navarre. This was the reason why she had not time to write so far as Martinique. Unhappily, she did not succeed in either of these enterprises, but was obliged to retire from the contest, with an annual allowance from the Baron of Durmeau, of two hundred francs a year.*

"You may imagine that we both required to work very hard to obtain bread to our salt; and, indeed, I believe my poor mother would have sunk under our afflictions, had it not been for the hopes she entertained from my growing beauty. While she was litigating for the barony, we were assured by all our visitors, that they could not look upon me without admiration and delight; that the loveliness of my person could only be excelled by the elegance of my manners; and that my extraordinary talents did ample justice to the pains which no doubt had been taken to bring them to perfection. Among the rest, Madame de Neuillant was by no means blind to my merits; and at last she even begged my mother to allow her the honour of

* About eight pounds sterling, at the present rate of exchange.

giving the last finish to my education under her own roof.

"My mother complied. She lost her causes—and here I am."

The young peasant to whom this history was related, had the audacity to make love to her, and she was immediately spirited away to the Ursuline convent of Niort. In 1649, when she was only fourteen, she lost her mother, and found herself altogether without resources; acquiring perhaps, in this dependent situation, the coldness and dissimulation of character which afterwards made her fortune. Heaven raised up a protector for this destitute girl, who married the comic poet Scarron, as a preparation for becoming the wife of a great king. It was Madame de Neuillant who had introduced her into the society of the poor abbé, who was in every respect, body and mind, the greatest burlesque of the age. Scarron, however, had a good heart, he was touched by the distressed condition of Mademoiselle d' Aubigné.

"Mademoiselle," said M. Scarron, after having considered for a moment, "I hope you will not think me too blunt; but you know I do not affect refinement. In a word, if you determine upon taking the veil, I will pay the expenses of your admission; if you prefer matrimony, I will marry you myself! But do not misunderstand me. You know what I am; a thing made up of smiles and misery—a cracked instrument, that instead of the

deepened tones of music, emits only tuneless shrieks of laughter. I can offer you nothing but a small fortune, and a disabled and paralytic friend. You shall be my daughter under the name of wife, for I have no other means of adopting you; and I shall look to you for nothing more tender than the cares of a nurse."

Scarron received the most agreeable company in Paris.

"The poet was a little, ugly, deformed, old-looking man, although in reality under fifty years of age. He had entirely lost the use of his legs, although his hands were still at his own disposal; and his eyes, by their excess of vivacity, seemed sufficient to make up for the immobility of all the rest of his body together. He was in the midst of one of his burlesque stories, and, although evidently a prey to disease, appeared to be an absolute personification of good-humoured mirth."

"That is Antoine de la Sablière," describes M. de Meré, who was himself one of the company, "who is in love with his wife, and vies with the Marquis de la Fare, and La Fontaine, in writing madrigals in her praise. Beside him stands Hainault, the translator of Lucretius, who is talking to that great broad-faced, lack-a-daisical individual, Des Guetaux, the pastoral poet. The latter is the homo who cleared a whole district of its astonished and terrified population, by skulking about the plains for an entire summer, fur-

nished with a crook, and a pipe, and a sword, and a court jacket, in order to qualify himself for writing about sheep. There is the Abbé Tetu, exchanging impromptus with the Duke de Vironnes. The Abbé, you may see, is looking every moment towards the door, in expectation of the entrance of the ladies. He is miserable in the society of men, except when listening to their love secrets, and on these occasions, he is really a useful creature, for he will fetch and carry like a very Pandarus, without expecting the smallest bit for his trouble. There is the Count de Grammont, his friend Matta, and his pen Hamilton. The last is good for nothing till he is put to paper—but then how he skips! La Fontaine, there in the corner, is about to read some of his fables; but he may shut the book, for by the pricking up of the Abbé's ears, I guess the women are just coming." At the moment the door opened, and a number of ladies bounded gracefully into the room. They were all closely masked, and preserved a profound silence, as the jest consisted in the length of time for which they should be able to keep the gentlemen in doubt as to their identity.

"There is the beautiful La Sablière," said M. de Meré, who seemed to look through the masks as their wearers passed; "her husband has seized upon the Countess de la Saze, thinking her his wife; whilst Madame de Sevigné, taken for the same lady by the Marquis de la Fare, is quizzing

the unhappy lover unmercifully in a feigned voice. I wish we could hear her—never was a better coquette spoiled by discretion. Their sails Ninon de l' Enclos. She is the most virtuous—hem!—in Europe; and, as St. Evremond has wittily said, possesses all the good qualities of an honest man.

"The ladies at length unmasked; La Fontaine proceeded with his fable; Ninon and her lover for the time being, Villarçeaux, sung and played; La Sablière, and the poets Charleval and Montreuil, recited madrigals; Grammont and Matta told a facetious story a-piece; and Coulanges and Marigny began a lively duet."

Scarron died in 1660, and the widow of the poor poet was taken by the hand by some old friends, and thrown into the great world. She became at length quite the fashion; and Fouquet, who had disputed his first mistress with the king, tried his seductions upon the woman who was destined to be his last passion. It is said that a magnificent present he sent to the beautiful widow, was returned.

The Queen-mother, who had protected Scarron continued after his death her kindness to the widow, and granted her a pension of two thousand livres, on which she was able to make a good figure in the high society into which she was now introduced. But the death of the Queen-mother deprived her of this pension, and sunk her again into the precarious life she had formerly known. In this pre-

dicament she addressed the King, and overwhelmed him with petitions, which followed each other without intermission, and were all refused.

"What, still the widow Scarron!" cried Louis, one day, and the expression became a proverb at court.

When Madame de Montespan first rose into favour, she was on the look out for a confidant who should be at once discreet and submissive; and she recollected the widow Scarron, whom she had met at the Hotel d' Albret, as a person in every respect suitable to her views. She gave her charge of the children she had had by the king; but the widow Scarron before entering on the office, desired to receive the orders from Louis himself. Thus began their acquaintance. She spoke a language so different from that which he had been accustomed to, that the king was at first shocked, and regarded her as a common-minded man of the world regards a blue stocking. But this prejudice changed into esteem; he took pleasure in her conversation; and then he acquired the habit of acting on her advice.

At the period we have now reached, the fair widow has been thus described:—

"Her beauty had reached the precise point of maturity, beyond which is decay, however gradual, and before which is unripeness, however bewitching. Time had just touched the portrait sufficiently to mellow the expression without

robbing the tints of one ray of brilliance. Her dark eyes were full of soul, when before there had been only fire; and her lip which was wont to move and glisten, was now tranquil and almost heavy, as if slumbrously enjoying its own velvet richness."

From her presentation at court, the widow Scarron had dropped her marriage name, and called herself the Marchioness de Surgères; which Madame de Montmorency, who rivalled Ninon in wit, found a difficulty in pronouncing, calling her Madame de *Suggere.* The latter name was certainly very applicable; for the widow was in reality the *suggester* of most of the king's resolutions. In 1674, the Marchioness de Surgère bought the estate of Maintenon, with the money she owed to royal bounty; and a few days afterwards, Louis called her Madame de Maintenon. This name, however, was not more fortunate than the other, for Ninon called her old friend Madame de *Maintenant.*

Madame de Maintenon was not slow in stepping between the king and Madame de Montespan, although not with the view of taking herself the part of favorite—her policy was of a far higher nature. She desired to increase to the utmost the esteem with which she had already inspired the king, and thus to acquire a paramount influence over his mind. The plan, so uncommon in that court, and so inconceivable to the persons who composed it, met with entire success; and our widow,

so far from shrinking at the awkwardness of giving her former patroness the congé, paraded it as an act of sublime virtue. Even the last profligacies of Louis she contrived to turn to account; taking the occasion to impress upon him not only the idea of future punishment, but of that withering satiety which is the hell of the voluptuous in the present world.

By and by he could do nothing without her. He passed every evening in her apartment; but, although he soon began to mingle the seductions of the profligate with the deference extorted by her superiority of mind, she never for a moment allowed herself to be dazzled by her fortune. It may be doubted whether she was really upheld by her virtue; but at any rate the fruits were gathered by her ambition. The queen's death in 1683, an event of absolute indifference to every body else, opened out to her a glorious vista. It seemed as if in her ripe age fortune was about to make up for all the miseries of her youth. The king openly declared his love; and as this was no longer *adulterous*, Madame de Maintenon owned the possibility of returning it. But, aware that a single weakness would be the destruction of her plan, the confession was mingled with so many scruples and coquettries, balanced with such admirable skill, that Louis left her presence in grief always, but always in hope. He, in fact, was in that state of mind that the mareschale de Nouilles said of him, "We must lose no time in

getting this man a suitable wife, or he will marry the first washerwoman he takes a fancy to."

But it must not be thought that Madame de Maintenon found it an easy task to persuade the king to confer upon her the last distinction in his power. To effect this, she could not depend upon herself alone, and still less did she depend upon the aid of the king's ministers, whom it is the common policy of favorites to try to win over to their side. She had recourse on this occasion to the jesuits; and so well did she manage, that it was Louis's own confessor who delivered him over into her hands.

For some years the important office of confessor —more important than a ministry of state—had been filled by Father La Chaise; a man between whom and Madame de Maintenon the same sympathies of character existed as had cemented the alliance of Madame de Montespan and Louis. There was as deep a dissimulation in his nature as in hers; and he possessed in as great degree the art of concealing the obstinacy of his purpose under the veil of gentleness. Ever since this jesuit had directed the king's conscience, he had led him on gradually towards the destruction of the protestants, which was always so great an object of his order. But it was not sufficient to withdraw from them the liberties that guaranteed their existence as a religious body; the jesuits desired that their worship, recognised by Henri IV., in the edict of

Nantes, should be formally and for ever suppressed. The idea of having only one religion in the state was very agreeable to Louis, who liked unity; but to obtain this object it was necessary to have recourse to violence. On this point Madame de Maintenon and Father La Chaise understood one another: the former engaging to use her influence, which she had already put in play with some success on the king's devotion, in behalf of the jesuits; and the latter promising to exercise his authority in persuading Louis into the marriage.

Madame de Maintenon thought justly that in plunging the king into a religious fury, she would give new strength at once to his conscientious scruples, and his love; and accordingly the spirit of persecution was soon abroad, and the civilization of the age dishonoured with the foulest stains of barbarism. Missionaries and dragoons were sent at the same moment to the protestants, to convert or to kill; and, at length, on the 18th October 1685, the king signed the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and thus authorised the commission of the most frightful outrages upon a considerable body of his subjects. The unhappy beings who were hunted by his wrath, had not even the privilege of crossing the frontiers, but when overtaken were massacred without mercy. Half a million protestants, notwithstanding effected their escape, and carried into other countries the arts and industry established by Colbert in France. In the midst of these horrors,

which drained the nation both of blood and wealth, an altar was set up one starless winter night, in a closet in the palace of Versailles; and Scarron's widow being brought in by the valet de chambre Bontemps, she was then and there united in holy wedlock to Louis XIV., in the presence of the Archbishop of Paris, Louvois, and Montchevreuil. Thus the favorite and the jesuit showed themselves worthy of each other, both keeping their word.

The marriage, however private, was the subject of general conversation, and it was everywhere regarded as the deepest humiliation which providence could inflict upon the proudest of kings. The royal family were now for ever divided. The dauphin, when he first heard of his father's intention, remonstrated bitterly; and when all was over, he retired from his presence. Louis never could persuade him to enter Madame de Maintenon's apartments. Once, on leaving the chapel, the king took his son's arm, and led him, as if unconsciously to the door. There, however, the prince disengaging himself, saluted his father respectfully, and turned away.

In the meantime, Madame de Maintenon was not yet satisfied with her lot. She desired that her private marriage should be publicly recognized; and, not contented with being the wife of Louis XIV., she panted to be the Queen of France. To arrive at this supreme end of her ambition she addressed herself to every power both of heaven and

earth. She at first had recourse to the jesuits, persecuting their enemies of nearly half a century, the jansenists, and declaring herself hostile to the sages of Port Royal, whose solitude had become a centre of philosophy and enlightenment. The jesuits, however, were not powerful enough for her purpose, and she applied direct to the Pope, negociating with Alexander VIII. the declaration of her marriage; and this he might have succeeded in obtaining, had not Louis discovered her intrigues in time, and contrived to frustrate them.

When the minister found that Louis was determined to marry Madame de Maintenon, and that no remonstrance was of any effect, he had yielded to his will; only obtaining a promise that the marriage should not be declared. The king, however, although he had resisted all the religious artifices put in play to make him withdraw from his word, yielded one day to the seductions of Madame de Maintenon, and consented to do all she wished. But this came to the knowledge of Louvois, who dispatching instantly a letter to the archbishop of Paris, who had been a witness and party to the king's promise, flew to his master, without waiting for the prelate's arrival, and threw himself at his feet. Louis would have left the room, but the minister stopped him; and, presenting his drawn sword, entreated the king rather to kill him than make him a witness of such disgrace. At this moment the archbishop entered, and between them

the work was accomplished. Some days after, Madame de Maintenon, who had grown uneasy, ventured some words to Louis on the subject, but he begged her to think no more of being declared.

Still she did not renounce every hope; and, after having implored the saints in vain, she had recourse to the devil. In 1699, there arrived at Versailles a blacksmith, who had come straight from the little town of Salon in Provence; and who, addressing himself to the major of the gardes-du-corps, desired to be conducted to the king, having something to say to him in private. He obtained, by dint of importunity, an audience of a minister of state; to whom he related a dream he had had several times in his own country. This was carried to the king by M. de Pomponne, and a council held on the subject. Louis at length wished to see the peasant; and subsequently had frequent interviews with him in his closet; but what passed between them was always a secret, and nothing more is known of the blacksmith than that the king showed him great consideration. Some persons, however, in seeking a clue to the mystery, discovered that at Marseilles, there was a certain Madame Arnoul, who had once been the intimate friend of Madame Scarron, and who still continued to keep up a secret correspondence with her. This woman, old, ugly, and odd in her habits, had the reputation of being a witch; and, it was conjectured by the explorers of these hidden things, that it was she who had suggested

to the blacksmith of Salon to proceed to Versailles, to cause Madame de Maintenon to be declared queen of France.

This proud ambition at length sunk, and Madame de Maintenon resigned herself to her obscure greatness. She now possessed the reality of power without aiming at its external distinctions; she determined every thing as the true sovereign, and yet had the wisdom, or the delicacy, to manage in such a way, as to leave all the appearance of authority to Louis, who, while swayed by his ministers and his mistresses, was always anxious to have it believed that in him alone resided the intellect and the power of the government. The council of ministers and generals was held in her presence; but, although she overruled their deliberations, it was without the smallest show of doing so. While they were occupied in discussion, she, as if adopting the character of an ancient matron, was equally busy with her distaff; but the king consulted her eyes, and with a glance or gesture she decided the fate of empires. With the ministers she played another game. She brought them to the point of laying their business before her, unknown to Louis, and before submitting it to the council; and she prescribed the manner in which each question should be introduced. Then, when the moment of discussion came, she, of course, affected to be ignorant of every thing. Thus she had more power than Maria Theresa; she inhabited apartments in the palace,

to which were afterwards added those smaller rooms in which she confined the old age of the king; in short, she was queen in every thing but name. It was observed, as a remarkable trait in her character, that her eagerness in pursuing any object she desired to accomplish was only equalled by her calmness when she found its accomplishment impossible.

Not many years were required to change entirely the character of the king, and bring him from the extreme of licentiousness to the extreme of devotion. The transition was sudden enough to disclose the weakness of a mind which imagined itself immovable, and yet submitted with singular facility to the influence of any one who would take the trouble to govern it. It was odd, that female ambition should have thought of producing a change like this—from the voluptuary to the ascetic. The court, however, followed the example of the king. Gallantry had been the fashion when he was young and amorous; hypocrisy became the rule when he was old and devout. Even the palace, which still more than the court, was the image of Louis, reflected in some degree the change; and this inanimate flatterer set about its conversion, and began to raise up religion upon the ruins of voluptuousness.

Formerly, at the right angle of the central body of the building, and in the place where the northern wing was built, which they called the new wing, there was a wonderful fountain, the Grotto of

Tethys, some fragments of which are seen to-day in the grove near the Baths of Apollo. All the artists whom Louis had drawn about him, had laboured to adorn this beautiful object. Perrault had designed the architecture, and Lebrun the figures; and Girardon, the rival of Coysevox, had executed the principal group. In the middle of the sheets of water which spread themselves over coral and mother of pearl, Apollo was seen ministered to by the nymphs. La Fontaine has celebrated this admirable grotto in his verses, so that no one might be ignorant of the voluptuous idea which had presided over its construction—of the meaning of the symbols by which the palace associated itself with the youth of Louis XIV.

But, when Madame de Maintenon had brought the king to repentance and the practice of devotion, the palace demolished its licentious grotto, and constructed on the ruins the chapel which remains to this day. Much time was necessary before Louis could lavish upon it all his magnificence; and the works continued to go on from 1699 to 1710. In the time of his father the chapel of the château had been in the southern façade; and Louis changed it to the north, near to the site it occupies to-day, but without encroaching upon the Grotto of Tethys. It was not till his religious scruples were excited that he sacrificed this cherished grotto. In doing this, at last, he seemed to renounce for ever the sins of his youth; and the palace, like an accomplished

courtier, lent itself with perfect grace to the mutilation, and placed a monument of piety on the same spot where it had heretofore raised a monument of pleasure.

But, if Louis repented of his debaucheries, he did not repent of his pride, and, this strongest passion of his soul, not satisfied with tyrannizing over men and nature, wished to exalt itself even above heaven. Mansard, who drew out the plan of the chapel, arranged it in such a manner that it spoke more of the glory of the king than of his God; and he proportioned its parts so that the altar appeared as nothing compared to the tribune where Louis appeared to worship. He placed the tabernacle on the ground floor, framing it in with low and heavy porticoes; while the king was established a stage higher, in the middle of a rich and lofty colonnade. The vault looked like an attic, although painted by Coypel, with all the glories of heaven. Thus every thing harmonized in this great monarchal work of Louis XIV.; and the chapel itself, although ostensibly the house of God, was really a monument to regal pride. Thus the king of France was the greatest being in the universe, and heaven itself was only the footstool of his throne. Remembering these things, we may comprehend the thrill which ran through the court when Massillon pronounced over his coffin these words, which the life of the king rendered sublime—"God is great, my brethren; *and God alone!*"

CHAPTER VIII.

Trianon—Palace of Flora—Louvois—The fatal window—Royal row—Insolence of a minister—Murder of Louvois—The old mistress and young minister—James II.—Louis at Trianon.

Louis XIV. attempted sometimes to drive away the sombre shadows which now crowded round his soul; and, in the midst of all the austerities imposed upon him by the ambition of Madame de Maintenon, he sometimes went to Trianon, to inhale the breath of the flowers which he had planted there, of the rarest and most odoriferous kinds. On the unfrequent occasions when the court was permitted to accompany him thither, to share in his evening collation, it was a beautiful spectacle to see so many charming women wandering in the midst of the flowers—

"Themselves a fairer flower"—

on the terrace rising from the banks of the canal. The air was so rich with the mingled perfume of violets, orange flowers, jessamines, tuberoses, sunflowers, hyacinths, and narcissuses, that the king and his visitors were sometimes obliged to fly from the overpowering sweets. The flowers were arranged in a thousand different figures, which were constantly changed, so that one might have supposed it to be the work of some fairy, who, passing over the gardens every night, threw upon them each time a new robe sparkling with jewels.

At first, an elegant house was constructed near these gardens, which was called the Palace of Flora; and which, being completed in the spring, seemed to have grown out of the earth with the flowers; but, in 1683, this "porcelain palace," as Saint Simon called it, was metamorphosed into a palace of marble and porphyry, and named Trianon, from the village which had been destroyed to make room for it. This is the most graceful production of Mansard. It is designed in the Italian taste, and consists of only one story, divided into a centre and two wings, united by a beautiful peristyle, adorned with Ionic columns. It is constructed of rose marble, and is as light and brilliant as the flowers that surround it.

Le Notre arranged the gardens in a manner adapted to strengthen the effect of the edifice; and the canal which terminates the park of Versailles afforded him admirable materials for so doing.

W. Collon. E. Radclyffe.

The Canal of Trianum

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Coming to Trianon from Versailles, although the distance is so trifling, one might imagine that he had entered a new country, and a new climate, and was approaching some delicious Italian villa. The earth is completely gilded with the flowers and marble, and their reflection floating in the water; so that it seems as if a warmer sun rose over the horizon, and coloured the whole landscape.

Louis thought of cherishing his old age on this delicious spot, and he watched the constructions in person. One day, while engaged in this occupation, he was followed by Louvois, who had succeeded Colbert in the superintendance of buildings. The king imagined that one of the windows was not so wide as the other, and made the remark to Louvois; but he, with his usual obstinacy maintained that there was nothing wrong. The king turned his back upon him. The next day he went again to Trianon, when seeing Le Notre, he referred the question to him; thus compelling the embarrassed artist to choose between the danger of offending the king or his minister. He made no reply, and Louis ordered him to measure the window; upon which Louvois grumbled aloud, and supported his opinion with heat. When Le Notre had finished, the king asked him which way it was, and noticing his embarrassment, commanded him to speak freely; upon which the unwilling umpire decided in favour of majesty. Louis immediately turning round angrily to Louvois, told him, in the presence of the

courtiers and workmen, that he could no longer endure his obstinacy, and that if he himself had not happened to observe the blunder, the building when finished, would have required to be taken down. The minister was furious at being treated thus in public. "I am lost," said he, to his private friends, "if I do not find occupation for this man. War only can turn him from building, and, *pardieu*, he shall have it, since it is necessary for one of us!"

He was not slow in keeping his word. He had often before brought on public events for the sake of arriving at some private end; and on the present occasion he found circumstances ready to his hand. Charles II. King of England, being dead, the Duke of York, his brother, succeeded to the crown under the name of James II.; and this prince had offered to Louis an ally still more devoted than the former. But he had now fallen from his throne, and was replaced by the Prince of Orange, the old personal enemy of the French king. No sooner was William in possession of the powerful resources of his new royalty, than he hastened to turn them against France, by putting himself at the head of the league which had already been formed at Augsburg. Louvois, if he had chosen, might have dissolved this league, by dividing the nations which composed it; but, as Duclos says, "he preferred rather to fan the flame, and in 1688, to deliver Europe to a general war, because a window in the new house at Trianon was too large, or too small."

The Lake and Hamlet of Trianon.

London. Published for the Proprietor by Longman & Co Paternoster Row.

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But this time Louvois was more furious than usual; and, in order to support his tottering favour, he determined to signalize himself by horrors hitherto unknown. He began the campaign of 1689, by burning the Palatinate. Heidelberg, the magnificent castle which Turenne had already reduced to ruins, Manheim, Spire, Worms, Oppenheim, and other towns, all were delivered to the flames. He wished, also, to set fire to the ancient city of Treves, but even the king was shocked at the proposal, and forbade it. Two days after, Louvois returned to the charge, and said that he had taken upon himself the destruction of this city, since it was offensive to the delicacy of the royal conscience, and had despatched a courier with the necessary orders. Louis, self-possessed as he usually was, could no longer contain his anger, but snatching up the tongs would have knocked his minister down, had Madame de Maintenon not ran in between them. "Dispatch another courier," said the indignant monarch, "and take care that he arrive in time. If but one house is burned, your head shall answer *it*!" But there was no need for a second messenger, as Louvois had not intended to send the first, till he had thus felt his way.

Madame de Maintenon, it will be seen, was not behind in *her* acting on the occasion. So far from desiring to save Louvois, it would have given her sincere pleasure if the king had finished him with

the tongs; but, knowing that this consummation could hardly take place, she mingled with her deadly hatred her usual deep dissimulation. As for Louvois, he hated her openly, and did his best to thwart her at all points. This was only natural; for it was not a little vexatious to see a woman rise up as his rival with the king, to establish himself in whose favour he had cut so many thousand throats.

The fiend-like ferocity of Louvois, however, in the present war, became fatal to France. The French troops were beaten in Flanders, and Versailles was in alarm. The treasury, too, was exhausted; and, under these trying circumstances, Louis was compelled to melt a great part of the plate which enriched his palace, and even the silver throne on which he had received the ambassadors of Europe and Asia. He made an appeal to the nobles, and they sent, like their master, a portion of their gold and silver vessels to the mint; Madame de Maintenon, who did every thing in season, distinguishing herself in this necessary generosity. The command of the army was given to the Marshal de Luxenbourg, the only general of name remaining, and whom the jealousy of Louvois had kept in the back ground; but, to animate still more the courage of the soldiers, he determined to show himself at their head, and to carry on in person the siege of Mons. He intended, as usual, to carry Madame de Maintenon, and his other familiars,

along with him; but Louvois, under pretext of economy, succeeded in getting him to abandon this part of the plan. It was, however, the minister's last act of power; and from her closet in Versailles, Madame de Maintenon contrived to destroy her enemy while triumphing at the head of the army.

The assurance of Louvois only seemed to increase as his favour became more in jeopardy. During the seige of Mons, the king walking one morning round the camp, found a guard of cavalry improperly placed, and saw that the necessary change was made. Returning in the afternoon, however, he found the post as before, and demanded in surprise who had done this?

"M. de Louvois," was the reply.

"Did you tell him that it was I who had made the change?"

"Yes, Sire."

"What think you of Louvois?" said Louis to those who followed him—"he fancies he understands war better than I!"

On his return from Mons, the king continued to transact business with his minister, but with a coldness and ill-humour which showed that his disgrace was approaching. Perhaps the fate of Fouquet may have been intended for him; but the grave received him before the dungeon had opened. On the 16th July, 1691, while engaged in business with the king in the apartments of Madame de Maintenon, he was taken ill so suddenly that he had only time

to return home, when his son, who hastened at his request to see him, found him dead. On the body being opened, it was discovered that he had been the victim of poison; which, it was said, was administered in a pot of water he always kept on his mantel-piece, to drink when thirsty. The weather was at this time very sultry, and he had drank before going into the palace. His family, at first, made a great noise; but, afterwards, preserved so profound a silence as to create much more speculation. An Italian doctor called Seroni, in the service of Louvois, who himself died from poison some time after, confirmed all suspicions as to his master's fate; but no one was able to point to the author of the crime.

Barbezieux, the son of Louvois, although still a minor, was put in his father's place, Louis declaring that he would bring up the son to business as he had done the father. Barbezieux was a young man of a striking and masculine figure, but still graceful and amiable in appearance. He had much talent and penetration, and was accustomed to work hard; retiring occasionally to solace himself with pleasures that were not always of a very delicate nature. No one, notwithstanding, had more the air of a man of the world, or more polished manners when he chose to assume them; but, like his father, he was proud, bold, insolent, revengeful in the extreme, and of a furious and ungovernable temper. He differed, however, from his father in this, that

he always behaved respectfully in the presence of Madame de Maintenon; and that lady, accordingly, rewarded him with her protection. He was able to take great freedom with the king, getting a holiday now and then, when he wished to enjoy himself. When he had drank too much the evening before, or when he had a party which he was unwilling to put off, he used to send to tell him that he had the fever. All Europe was surprised at the oddness of Louis XIV., in having so old a mistress, and so young a minister.

The war was general, and fiercer than ever, but its principal centre was Flanders, where King William and Marlborough fought side by side. France was menaced on all sides, on her frontiers, and on her coasts; and as if she had not enough to do at home, the father of Barbezieux had sent French troops into Ireland, to second the invasion of James II. This poor king had been received in France for the second time; Louis, notwithstanding the representations of foreign powers, assigning him the palace of Saint Germain, and fifty thousand francs a month for his expenses. One day he remained for a long time shut up with his royal guest at Versailles, and at their parting, he said to him, "I trust, sir, we shall never meet again; but if fortune should send you back, be assured you will find me the same." The King of England set out the next day for Ireland; where he lavished uselessly the blood and money of France.

The war continued to rage for some time, the "old machine," as the power of Louis XIV. was called in Europe, continuing to lose its power more and more; till at length, a peace was concluded at Ryswich, near the Hague, by which the French restored to Spain everything they had taken since the treaty of Nimeguen, sent back their troops which had crossed the Rhine, and acknowledged William III. king of England. France had lavished her strength beyond measure; her money was absorbed by odious taxes, and her blood smoked on a hundred fields of battle. But Barbezieux began again his life of debauchery, which speedily conducted him to the grave; and Louis gave himself up to a gentler passion for the flowers of Trianon, whose intoxicating perfume he went every evening to inhale.

CHAPTER IX.

Marly—Saint Cyr—Meudon—A prince's mistress without ambition—The King's brother—Condé—The heroic cook—Sceaux—The accomplished courtier—The Jansenists—Demolition of Port Royal.

Among the satellites of Versailles, which the caprice of Louis raised into rivalry with the great palace, Marly may be mentioned first. It was built by way of a hermitage, in a deep, narrow, marshy valley; but by degrees, all the wonders of art assembled round it, and the site and neighbourhood of a miserable village was covered with buildings, gardens, waters, aqueducts, the famous Machine of Marly, parks, forests, statues, cascades, and deep groves, opening its vast sheets of water, which the court traversed in gondolas. The sumptuous prodigalities of this place concurred with the frequent wars to empty the treasury; and at length we find the great king condescending to cheat the banker Bernard, by his polite attentions, into a

loan of money, enough for the exigencies of the moment.

The retreat of Madame de Maintenon was of a very different character. True to the last to her dissimulation, the abode she chose for herself at Saint Cyr was ostentatiously plain; and she there gave herself up to the maintenance and education of young ladies of noble birth, whose poverty might have otherwise exposed them to the miseries she had herself experienced. The tragedy of Esther was played at Saint Cyr, by the young ladies of the community, in 1689, when Louvois was still all powerful, and when Madame de Montespan had hardly quitted Versailles. The characters of Vashti, Haman, and Esther, were known to represent Madame de Montespan, Louvois, and Madame de Maintenon.

The court was partially admitted to these representations, Louis XIV. frequently took there the king of England, who was now returned to end his days in France. At the request of Henrietta of England, Racine had composed his Berenice. During Madame de Montespan's reign of favour, he had, in the character of Phedre, depicted the vice and licentiousness of adultery; and Esther he intended for Madame de Maintenon. This is history incorporated with poetry. Athaliah was written for Madame de Maintenon's theatre, and was twice performed at Versailles by the young ladies of St. Cyr. The court did not admire it, and public

opinion, following its guidance, was long in giving approbation to that immortal piece. The vexation Racine experienced on this account, shortened his life. But there was at Meudon another party greatly irritated at the advancement of Madame de Maintenon.

The Castle of Meudon had been in the 16th century the scene of the amours of the Duchess d'Etampes and Francis I. It had been purchased by Louis XIV. for Madame de Louvois, who presented it to the dauphin. The castle was rebuilt, and Le Nôtre ordered to plan the gardens. The dauphin was an amiable but weak man, and only wished to live as retired as was consistent with his rank; he had indeed reaped honours at the siege of Phillipsburgh, but they were too burdensome for him to sustain. His opposition to the marriage of Madame de Maintenon, made him at one time the head of a party. Madame de Montespan, whom he always received with kindness, made the castle a rendezvous for her partizans, and her useless intrigues; and it was here that the daily sarcasms against Madame de Maintenon, and which did not spare the king himself, were uttered.

Madame de Maintenon did everything to smoothe the dauphin, and paid court to him with the greatest assiduity. After the death of the dauphiness, who had lived in retirement and neglect, Mademoiselle Chauvin, called Chouin, maid of honour to the Princess Conti, gained the affections of the prince; she was not pretty, but lively, and so ex-

tremely amiable, that she was universally beloved. She never had either an establishment or equipage of her own, but lived in lodgings in the faubourg Saint Antoine. When the dauphin went to Meudon, she set off from Paris in a hired carriage, and returned in the same manner when the dauphin went back to Versailles. Madame de Maintenon was anxious to gain her interest, and privately arranged a marriage of conscience for her, offering her apartments in Versailles, if the dauphin would consent to her being declared queen. But the Maintenon of Meudon was not so ambitious as the Maintenon of Versailles; and she informed the dauphin of all, advising him to refuse every overture. Being his wife, she was content to appear as his mistress; although still, she assumed at Meudon the manner befitting her real position, and kept her chair in the presence of princes.

Louis XIV. had the whole of his family within reach of his observation, and sensible that he could not compel them to remain constantly at Versailles, gave them castles in the neighbourhood. He obliged his son to quit Choisy, which had been left him by Mademoiselle de Montpensier, and to establish himself at Meudon. It was Louis also who built the Château of Saint Cloud for his brother; where Hardouin Mansard was employed as architect, and the arrangement of the gardens given to Le Nôtre, who displayed the scope of his talents on the declivities of the hill.

The Duke of Orleans, who lived at Saint Cloud,

had abandoned himself to the most disgusting licentiousness, which had alike enervated his mind and body: busy, suspicious, always creating quarrels and disturbances for his amusement, his only merit consisted in giving life to the court, by the recreations he introduced, so that when he went away, everything appeared vapid and dull. Although so timid when with the king, that he even condescended to flatter his mistresses and ministers, yet he mingled with his respect, the manners and familiarity of a brother. In private, he took still greater liberties, and always seated himself without waiting for the royal permission. After supper, in the king's apartment, he was the only prince seated, not even the dauphin being allowed the honour. He occasionally ventured an epigram upon his brother, but this lasted a very short time, for as gaming and St. Cloud cost him immense sums, Louis secured his silence by giving him money. But he never could bring himself to bend to Madame de Maintenon, nor resist sometimes taunting the king. It was not the favour she enjoyed which vexed him, but that the Scarron should have become his sister-in-law—this thought was intolerable. His first wife Henrietta of England, in consequence of the king's affection for her, and the marked attention he always paid her, had long been the true sovereign of the court and fashion; his second wife, the princess of Bavaria, whom policy had induced him to marry, possessed less eclat, but more sense. As

frequent company fatigued her, she was considered of an unsocial disposition, and it was said that she passed her time in an apartment she had chosen for herself, in contemplating the portraits of German princes she had worked in tapestry, and in writing volumes of letters of which she kept copies. The Duke of Orleans did not at all approve of this mode of life; he wanted her to appear to greater advantage to his visitors. At Saint-Cloud were received gamblers, crowds of ladies, princes, lords and ministers, who came in the afternoon from Versailles and Paris, to pay their court to him; there was only one thing in which he was particular, he would never allow any one to stop as they went from Paris to Versailles, or from Versailles to Paris; and this question was generally asked. Amusements of every description, the extraordinary beauty of the scenery, which numerous carriages rendered accessible to the most indolent, music, exquisite fare, all combined to render Saint-Cloud a most delightful place. During the life time of Monsieur the court at Saint Cloud never occasioned the slightest uneasiness to its rival of Versailles; but, after his death, which took place in 1701, the Duke de Chartres, his son, gave it real importance without diminishing its pleasures.

Under the shades of Chantilly, the great Condé had formerly dreamed of plans which might have prevented Louis from building at all Versailles; but the Fronde was now entirely forgotten. Condé

was at present the friend of that king whom he had nearly dethroned; and who exclaimed from his balcony, when he saw the prince, old and lame, coming to pay him homage, "Do not hurry yourself, cousin; it is not surprising that you should walk with difficulty, when you are so loaded with laurels."

Versailles returned the visits of Chantilly; and in 1671, Condé received Louis XIV. in his castle. The fête cost him two hundred thousand livres of the money of that period. It was celebrated for its magnificence, and for the death of the Prince's cook, Vatel, whose honour was placed in his science as that of others is in their courage; the codfish not arriving in time for dinner, he stabbed himself three times, the first two blows not being fatal. Madame de Sevignè wrote, on the morrow, one of her graphic letters about the catastrophe.

Louis was so enraptured with the beauties of Chantilly, that he begged Condé to resign it to him; but leaving him at liberty to name his own price. "It is yours, Sire, at any price you please," replied the prince; "the only boon I crave is to be appointed keeper."

"I understand you, cousin," rejoined the king; "Chantilly shall never be mine."

The embellishments constantly added to the château by Condé did not destroy its venerable air of antiquity. Flanked by towers, surrounded by a moat filled with water, it resembled a warrior of

the olden time, who still remained alive in the middle of the seventeenth century. Condé's vanity imagined that he alone represented the heroic race of the old chevaliers; and he endeavoured to make his very residence shadow out this thought. Le Nôtre, who planned the park, had exerted his utmost talents to display the various modes by which water may be conducted to ornament gardens; and he illustrated his art with a splendour perfectly unknown before. The view of the moat behind which the castle is entrenched, gives an idea that the princes who inhabited it had erected this fortress, concealed by forests, to protect their liberty, or to conceal their revolt. But, after the death of the great Condé, no revolutionary thought was ever breathed within its walls.

In 1676, Colbert built a magnificent château at Sceaux. Le Brun's pictures adorned its walls; Le Nôtre designed the gardens, park, and shrubberies; the chisels of Perjet and Girardon were employed in its decorations. It was in this splendid mansion that the promoter of French industry formed all those plans of administration which have obliterated the faults and follies of his life. He there gave several fêtes that vied with those of Versailles, and at which the king assisted. The very year that Colbert died, his son, the Marquis de Seignelay, received there the honour of a visit from his majesty. In 1700, the Duke of Maine purchased the castle of Sceaux.

This prince was the eldest son of Madame de Montespan by the king; he was cold, dissembling, and wicked, yet wanting courage and daring, he was dreaded only for the mischief he worked in secret; his body was neither more healthy nor more upright than his mind; his gait was limping, and he died at last from a cancer in his face. His character may be summed up in two words; he became a voluntary instrument to his mother's disgrace, and the favourite of Madame de Maintenon, whose hypocrisy he had imbibed. Thanks to the great friendship subsisting between him and his governess, he was always distinguished at court, and had nearly become one of the most important officers of the state.

The Duchess de Maine, grand-daughter to the great Condé, was clever and intriguing; she at first endeavoured to satisfy her love of action, by fêtes, and while arranging parties of pleasure, to fit herself for the cabals of politics. She possessed great taste, and expended large sums in adorning the château of Sceaux. Passionately fond of acting, she had a theatre built; and her balls were as splendid as those of Marly and Versailles.

The count de Toulouse, the Duke de Maine's brother, a wise and moderate man, bought, in 1705, the estate of Rambouillet, where Francis I. died, and which was formed for him into a dukedom. Armenonville, who sold it, did so out of respect only, and in order to induce him to agree to the

bargain, the use of the Château de la Muette, in the forest of Boulogne, was granted him. The Count's new residence experienced neither more notice nor troubles than its owner.

The Duke d'Antin, Madame de Montespan's only legitimate son, possessed a magnificent mansion at Petit-Bourg, were he was occasionally honoured by the king's visits. After his mother's death, he paid court to Madame de Maintenon, whose friendship he at last secured, as the brother of those bastards she was so fond of, and with whom he had always been an friendly terms. He performed things almost incredible, and which resemble fairy tales, in order to induce the king to sleep under his roof, when the court was at Fontainbleau. He first bribed the valets of Madame de Maintenon, entered her apartments, and took a plan of the room, the disposition of the furniture—even to the disarrangement in which the things were placed or carelessly thrown—even to the places marked in the books. All was found in her room at Petit Bourg, precisely the same as at Versailles; and to this refinement of gallantry he added a profusion of everything, whether of use or luxury; nothing was neglected, all was magnificent; delightful music, interminable amusements, and elegant equipages for driving. The king arrived early, walked a good deal, and praised and approved of everything, except a fine avenue of chesnut trees, one of the principal beauties of the place, but which shut out the view from the chamber

in which he was to sleep. The Duke d'Antin said nothing, but the next morning, when the king awoke, he saw from his windows a most lovely prospect, instead of the avenue, not a vestige of which remained any more than if it had never existed. No one had heard the least noise, the trees were gone, and the ground as smooth as if it had never been broken. D'Antin was not long in reaping the reward of his gallantry; at Mansard's death he was appointed Inspector of Buildings, and always enjoyed great favour.

The château d'Anet, which Philip Delorme had built for Diana of Poitiers, was inhabited by the most illustrious of all Henry the Fourth's illegitimate sons, the Duke de Vendôme. As repulsive by his cynical manners, as he was formidable by his ambition and military genius, Vendôme was the only general except Catinet who was able to shed a few rays of glory on the last days of Louis XIV.; but he was most insolent in his prosperity. Banished from court because he would not yield due respect to Madame de Maintenon, he lived at Anet as a sovereign; and, when he returned after his victories, such a concourse of people followed him there that Versailles and Marly appeared quite deserted. If the duke and his secretary, the greatest of rogues, had not found sufficient occupation in Spain, there is no saying how far they might have sown cabals at court, and sedition in the nation.

But, in the circle of satellites that surrounded

Versailles, we must point out one solitary star, which shone modestly amidst its greater and more fiery rivals. At the very moment that France was manifesting her pride and power, beyond her usual bounds, many gifted minds by a natural re-action fell back on themselves, and remained inactive. While the world was agitated by a movement, which for its violence, its duration, and its glory, had never been equalled, they renounced the pomps and glories of this world.

By a singular contrast these individuals had fixed themselves near Versailles, and thus sheltered their moderation in a neighbourhood agitated by the most violent passions. The small and humble valley of Chevreux was situated about three leagues to the south of Versailles; from it nothing but the heavens above could be seen; for the surrounding hills had no towering summits, rising one over another, but seemed, by their very uniformity, to present an image of moderation and solitude. Here was the abbey of Port-Royal-des-Champs, occupied by the nuns of the order of the *Adoration perpétuelle.*

It was here, that for nearly half a century, amidst all the splendours of the court of Louis XIV., the Jansenists declared that man was nothing, and that the grace of God was every thing on earth. The great Arnauld, Pascal, Nicole, Le Maître, de Lacy, Lancelot, Sainte-Marthe, Racine, had all resided there, and added to its celebrity by their doc-

trines and their genius. The enmity of the jesuits, which accorded with the king's pride, was not, however, swayed by these considerations. The court of Rome condemned the Jansenists, and that of Versailles persecuted them; while Father Tellier, who was, after La Chaise, confessor to the king, never rested till he had persuaded His Majesty to sign their final destruction.

October 24, 1709, d'Argenson, lieutenant of police, arrived at Port Royal with three hundred archers; seized all the nuns he could find, and fixed his seal on every thing. The hatred of the Jesuits was not yet satiated. The community was dispersed, but the house remained; and the council issued another writ for the demolition of the nunnery. On the 22nd January, 1710, the materials were all sold, and every trace utterly destroyed. But ideas imprint on the minds of men vestiges which the power of kings cannot efface; and philosophy, a taste for which the Jansenists had ever inculcated, was not destroyed by their proscription, but at a later period nobly revenged their ruin.

CHAPTER X.

Saint Simon and his memoirs—The Duke of Burgundy and his master Fenelon—Bossuet and Fenelon—The royal romp—Diary of the Court—Selfishness and cruelty of Louis—The fortunes of a billiard player—French king of Spain—Eugene and Marlborough—Alarm in the Court—Awful mortality in the royal family—Melancholy of the king—His illness and death.

THERE had been for some time at court a young man of a firm, resolved, and inquiring mind, very observant, somewhat sceptical, and possessing great powers of ridicule, which he did not hesitate to launch against majesty itself, respecting no power either heavenly or earthly, except one, which was nobility—a man for whom nature had done much more than education, who had more tact than taste, more judgment than reason, more irony than ideas, but who knew men thoroughly, and excelled in depicting their characters. This young man was Saint Simon, son of one of Louis XIII.'s favourites. Seeking to make his way at Court, he neglected no acquaintance it was in his power to form;

he introduced himself every where; his title of duke and peer placed him on an equal footing with the highest; he remarked all, and heard secret and public transactions related at the fountain head. His insatiable curiosity embraced the past as well as the present; he knew genealogy better than any one, and could immediately give the birth and parentage of all whom he saw. He venerated the past, but was sufficiently unconnected with the splendours of royalty to be able to reason on it. He had from infancy been intimate with the Duke de Chartres, and entertained hopes of preferment from the Orleans family; hence arose his prejudice against the glory of Louis XIV., which seemed to desire to eclipse all others. From the connexions he formed, the friendships he made, the histories he heard, and the originality of his character, there resulted such a mixture of levity and sense, of superstition and satire, as will perhaps never be seen again.

It is impossible to read any thing more interesting, curious, instructive, witty, and serious, than the memoirs of Saint Simon on the latter part of Louis XIV.'s reign. On one side is seen a generation passing away before the king who had, as it were, formed it. Man after man, delusion after delusion, wish after wish, vanish—as soldiers are mown down in the field of battle before the eyes of the general who leads them on. On the other side, there is a new race, approaching with satirical smiles, and im-

patient to throw off the yoke that binds them, which they imagine themselves born to achieve. Both these races intermix with each other; one exposes its vice, the other shrouds itself in its hypocrisy; one talks of reform, while the other believes in the perpetuity of its own creations; one laughs as the other dies; and we see Saint Simon, niched in a corner at Versailles, remarking and noting all that passes, not in short sentences like Dançeau, but in long paragraphs, crowded with metaphors, with indistinct and unfinished pictures, like the reality of life itself. All the coffins that pass by, all the tombs that are closed, all the births that happen, all the marriages that are made, every reputation that is lost or won, every event fortunate or unfortunate, tragical or comical,—all are described with delightful naïvetè, and thrown, as a bridge, over the gulf which separates the seventeenth from the eighteenth century.

All the young men who afterwards committed so many follies, crowded round the Duke of Burgundy, eldest son of the Dauphin. This youthful prince, who, while he entertained the new opinions, lived in a propriety so rigid, that he impressed every body with respect, and led men to believe that the age over which he seemed destined to preside would be more virtuous than its predecessor. He was, however, born with the vices of the age, passionate, violent, haughty, proud, contemptuous, pompous, and fastidious. But his education, the best ever

given to a prince, corrected these vices. Fenelon, his preceptor, had every virtue that springs from the union of a noble mind with the highest powers of intellect; he applied himself to inculcate generous sentiments and ideas, such as were in direct opposition to the established despotism. He added all the charms of imagination to the maxims of philosophy; and his admirable work, Telémachus, details, in the garb of poetry, the doctrines he taught the Duke of Burgundy, and which were bolder than any before advanced. His lessons were not thrown away, and his pupil astonished the court of Louis XIV. by declaring, that "kings were made for their subjects, and not their subjects for them; that they ought to punish justly, because they were the guardians of the laws; give rewards, because these are debts; never presents, because, possessing nothing of themselves, they could only give at the public expense; and that subjects could only be insured necessaries when kings denied themselves superfluities."

Bossuet had educated the Dauphin, and had also written a chef d'œuvre, a "Discourse on Universal History;" but he did not teach such precepts. Bossuet was fitted to complete the work of Louis XIV.; in the midst of the king's triumphs he forgot the storms which darkened the beginning of his reign, and foresaw not the misfortunes which would close its end. Thus he became the theologian of despotism, and the orator of all great po-

tentates. Fenelon belonged to a later period, where misfortunes, the more severe, because unexpected, gave rise to the greatest anxiety, and turned every eye with anxious expectancy to the future. Before he gave lessons to the Duke of Burgundy, he had himself received them from the misery the people suffered through the magnificence of the court, and from the groans of indignation which arose on all sides from the pride of the nobles. The disputations of Bossuet and Fenelon occupied the last days of Louis XIV.; but under the veil of theology which both these great men adopted, may be discerned the struggle of two different epochs. Fenelon gave way; and that was only natural, for Louis could not condemn himself—it was sufficient punishment to witness in his grandson sentiments that overturned his whole system of policy. At first, he showed some displeasure towards Fenelon's pupil; but soon, disarmed by his virtues, he ordered his ministers to go and consult him. Hence it was fondly hoped, that his reign would repair the injuries done by his grandfather.

The Duke of Burgundy married, in 1697, a daughter of the Duke of Savoy, whose wit and gaiety was a pleasant contrast to the sombre events of the old age of the monarch. By her playfulness the duchess gained the affection of the king, and that of Madame de Maintenon by her flattery.

She threw her arms round the king's neck at all times, sat on his knees, played all kinds of tricks on

him, looked at his papers, opened and read his letters in his presence, sometimes in spite of his efforts to prevent her; and she did the same to Madame de Maintenon, whom she called "ma tante" (my aunt.) Sometimes when she had covered her with kisses, she ventured on still greater boldness. "Do you know, aunt," said she one day before the king, "why the queens of England govern better than the kings? It is because when a woman reigns, men govern; and, when kings, women."

She did not even spare the duke her husband. She laughed at his great devotion, and nearly offended the king by saying one day, "I should like to die before my husband, that I might return and find him married to a tourière of Saint Marie, or to a Grey Sister." But, not contented with laughing at him, under cover of her childish folly she often annoyed him more seriously.

Louis thought, at first, that the duchess might assist him to restore the brilliancy of his court, which had greatly fallen off. He had always regretted the splendid circle that surrounded Anne of Austria, in which he had been brought up. He had tried to introduce it anew with his queen, whose insignificance and foreign language soon destroyed the project. Not being able to abandon this wish, he tried again, after the queen's death, what he could do by means of the Dauphiness; who, by her dignity, grace, and conversation, was admirably fitted for such a purpose; but her fre-

quent confinements made it inconvenient, and the lingering illness which followed the last rendered the attempt abortive. The extreme youth of the duchess of Burgundy prevented the king from thinking of her at first; but, in 1704, he considered her sufficiently formed for his beloved ceremonies. He therefore desired, that on tuesday, which was the day when all the foreign ministers were at Versailles, the Duchess should dine alone, attended by his gentlemen in waiting; that there should be at her dinner ladies sitting and standing; and that, afterwards, she should hold a drawing-room, where the Duchess of Orleans, the princesses of the blood, and all the ladies, sitting and standing, should attend, as well as all the lords of the court. This order was put in practice in the middle of November, and continued for some time; but a ceremony so serious, with the obligation to entertain and converse with so many people, was in no way suited to a lively princess, one who was always timid in public, and, moreover, very young. By degrees, therefore, these court-days were postponed, and were never re-established.

This was a great grief to the king, who loved pomp, and yet never had any one who could give that high tone of etiquette and style which he was so ambitious of establishing. His vanity was henceforth obliged to be contented with private life, and his arrangements there were somewhat curious. A clever woman of the day related at Meudon what

passed at Versailles, and her recital deserves quotation. "The first thing Madame de Maintenon does," said she, "is to go out in the morning to mass, and during that time the king is with his confessor. The Duke of Burgundy does not leave his chapel; his Duchess amuses herself in the park and menagerie; in the afternoon, this princess diverts the king by her childish play—she kisses him, skips before him, pulls his ear, pinches his nose, taps his cheeks, sits on his knees, and plays at blindman's buff with the young Duke de Fronsac. And what is Madame de Maintenon doing?—reading the *saint of the day*, or giving slight reprimands to the young duke, who sometimes takes too great liberties with the princess. That offends her husband, who looks in for a moment on coming from vespers; and then the king frowns, and the game ceases. The duchess returns to her apartments, and the Monarch and his old favourite go to prayers, and entreat the Almighty to look with compassion on this princess, and protect her from corruption." Greatly however as he loved his grand-daughter, he nearly occasioned her death, because he would not change any of his own pleasures. Saint Simon tells the anecdote well, throwing a strong light upon the character of Louis.

"The Duchess of Burgundy was pregnant," says he, "and very unwell; but the king would not for that give up their visits to Marly. His grand-daughter amused him greatly, he could not and would not do without her, although the motion of

a carriage was too much for her delicate state. Madame de Maintenon was very uneasy; and Fagon, the king's physician, ventured to insinuate his advice. That annoyed the king, who was never accustomed to contradiction, and spoiled by always having had his mistresses to travel with him, even when so situated, or but lately recovered from their confinements, and always in grand toilette. He merely deferred his journey from the day after Low Sunday, to the Wednesday in the following week, taking the princess with him in spite of every entreaty to leave her at Versailles.

"The following Saturday, Louis was walking after mass, and amusing himself at the bason with the carps, when we saw the duchess de Lude approaching alone, though, according to the morning custom, there were no ladies with the king. He saw she had something to communicate, and went to meet her; and when within a short distance we stopped to allow them to be alone. The tête à tête was not long. She turned back, and the king rejoined us without saying one word. Every one felt what it was; and no one was anxious to speak. At last, the king, coming close to the bason, and looking at it, without addressing any one, said angrily these few words: 'The Duchess of Burgundy has hurt herself.' The expression was repeated by some aloud, and echoed by others in a lower tone; and at length M. de Rochefoucald declared, it was the greatest misfortune possible, because having been before hurt it might prove dangerous.

"'And if it should be so,' the king angrily exclaimed, who had not till then spoken, 'what would it be to me? Has she not already a son? and even should she die, is not the duke de Berri young enough to marry again, and have a family? What does it signify to me who succeeds me, this or that? Are they not all equally my grandsons?' And then he fervently added, 'Thank God, she is hurt, since it was to be, and I shall be no more contradicted in my journeys, and in all I wish to do, by the advice of doctors, or the lectures of matrons. I can go and come when it pleases me, and I shall be left in peace.' Every one looked down, scarcely daring to breathe. All remained still, even to the workmen and gardeners; and the silence lasted nearly a quarter of an hour.

"The king broke it—he leant over the railing and spoke of the carp. No one answered. He then spoke to the workmen about the carp, but they could not hold their usual conversation; all felt restrained, and the king went away shortly. As soon as we dared to look at one another unseen by him, our eyes told all. All there assembled felt themselves the confidants of each other. They wondered, lamented, and shrugged their shoulders. Although so long past, this scene is ever before me. M. de la Rochefoucauld was furious. The first ecuyer trembled with fear. I examined every one attentively, and congratulated myself on having long thought that the king cared for nobody but himself."

The favorite minister at this time was somewhat of a ninny, but good, kind, patient; a warm friend, a moderate enemy; not very clever, but very opinionated, as all people of little minds are, smiling compassionately at those who differed in opinion from him, loving the king above all things, and being loved by him. His profound incapacity was precisely what the king liked him for; at every step he owned his inefficiency to his master, who was delighted to direct and instruct him, and so became as zealous for his success as for his own. For the rest he had an easy address, a retentive memory, and flowing style, and he pleased Madame deMaintenon. This man was Chamillart, who was appointed comptroller general of finance in 1699, and minister of war in 1701 after the death of Barbezieux. He was thus called upon to support the weight of two burdens, which, separately, had demanded the entire attention of Colbert and Louvois. He had made his fortune in a singular manner. He was counsel for parliament, and much given to gambling, which the king had brought into fashion; and which superseded conversation at court, and was the only expedient for killing ennui. Chamillart played all games, but excelled at billiards. M. de Vendôme, the Marèchal de Villeroy, and the Duke de Grammont, who had played with him at Paris, were so pleased that they named him to the king, who was fond of this game, and played every evening in winter. The king desired them to bring

him back with them the first time they went to Paris. Chamillart came to Versailles, and the king having found that they had not praised him too much, took him into his own party, where he was the best player, but without showing it. His cunning modesty gained him the friendship of the king, who advanced him by degrees, gave him an apartment at Versailles—an extraordinary thing for a man of his standing, took him to Marly, and presented him to Madame de Maintenon, who liked him, and gave him the management of the temporal concerns of Saint Cyr, and assisted him in passing from the billiard table to the council of ministers. The time was come when political talents were a cause of mistrust; Vauban lost his credit at court, for employing in the administration that superior intellect which had rearranged the affairs of the army. Madame de Maintenon would be the only mistress; her small apartment had become the sanctum of the kingdom; and the arm chair that she always occupied, the real throne. Nothing was done but by her; yet to execute her intentions she employed only weak and blind machines, in order that the skilfulness of the directing hand behind might be more evident.

Perhaps, there never had been a greater call for true and faithful officers; never a greater occasion for France to display the whole strength of her genius. In the midst of the disasters which assailed the whole age of Louis XIV., God brought about an event which might have compensated for the

heaviest misfortunes, had they known how to profit by it. Charles II. King of Spain, died November 2nd, 1700, without heirs, about a month after he had signed a will naming the Duke d'Anjou grandson of Louis XIV. his successor. What brighter dream could the king have framed? After having, made war with Spain all his life, he saw himself at last completely her master, and his race occupying the place of that of Charles V., not only in Europe, but also in the very place where so many outrages had been attempted against his dynasty. This fortune was too intoxicating to leave him at liberty to calculate the disadvantages it might bring in its train. The king's deliberation was not long; he had only received the will of Charles II. a fortnight when he summoned the Spanish ambassador into his cabinet; then he sent for the Duke d'Anjou, and said to the ambassador, "You may salute him as your king."

The ambassador fell on his knees and kissed his hand, after the Spanish fashion. His majesty ordered the folding doors to be thrown open, and every one admitted, when he said, "Gentlemen, here is the King of Spain—called by birth to his throne; the whole nation earnestly wish it. It is the will of heaven." Then turning to the King of Spain, he said, "Be a good Spaniard; it is now your first duty; but remember you were born a Frenchman, to preserve peace between these two nations; it is the way to render them happy, and

maintain the peace of Europe. Henceforth there are no longer Pyrenees."

The new King of Spain, who took the name of Philip V., left Versailles the 26th December, all the royal household accompanying him to Sceaux. Some days after, the Spanish minister wrote to Louis XIV. to beg he would give orders in the territories of his Catholic Majesty the same as in his own. But a general war soon followed this astonishing fortune, and humbled the pride of the king, which had risen to its greatest height. It began in Italy, soon broke out in the low countries, and Germany; and the whole continent between the two seas was again the seat of war.

Two formidable enemies were opposed to Louis, and both had earned a high military character. The Prince Eugene and Marlborough appeared at the head of the European alliance, the first in Italy, with the title of Generalissimo of the Imperial army, the second in Flanders, as Commander-in-Chief of Queen Anne's troops, who had now succeeded the Prince of Orange to the English crown. These two great captains, by their credit and reputation, commanded the whole combined force of Europe. Louis XIV. could oppose to them skilful generals. Catinal and Vendôme were in the full vigour of their genius; Villars was just beginning to display his. But they were replaced after the first battles, in which they maintained the French honours, by favorites who lost them. Tallard was beaten at

Hochstedt, Villeroy at Ramillies, Lafeuillade before Turin. In 1708 all our frontiers were forced, and our armies driven to the boundaries which Louis XIV. had trampled down the first time he led them in person. To assist Philip V. to conquer his kingdom, which had revolted on all sides, he greatly diminished his forces; sending troops into Spain that were required to repair our own losses, and in Vendôme, a general who might yet have saved us. Not being able to keep up the war, the king asked peace of the States General of Holland, whose prayers he had thirty years before refused with so much insolence. The Dutch republicans were not less hasty or implacable than he had been; it was now their turn to add contempt to their victories, and fortune had reserved this bitter mortification for Louis, in order that he might show himself more truly great than in the proudest moments of his triumph.

Prince Eugene and Marlborough were within two days of Paris. After having so greatly extended his dominions, Louis XIV. found himself barely equal to defend those left him by his predecessors. The court was panic struck, it was proposed to the king to leave Versailles, and retire to the castle of Chambord, on the banks of the Loire. Had Louis then only reared his magnificent palace to give it up a prey to his enemies? The Germans, Dutch, and Spaniards, were they to efface with victorious hands, those very pictures that

represented their defeat? Was Prince Eugene to take possession of that room in which the king had refused him a company in his army? Was Marlborough to add Versailles to his country seats? For the king to quit Versailles was like parting from himself, owning the nothingness of all his endeavours, and proclaiming the end of the monarchy he had established with so much trouble. For Versailles was the soul, life, and the second and more lasting part of Louis XIV. Versailles was the trophy erected over the last conquered remains of feudalism; Versailles was, in short, the monarchy itself. Fly to Chambord, to the palace of Francis I.! It was placing the Bourbons under the protection of the race of Valois; it was retreating into the dark ages, and forswearing entirely the seventeenth century. When it was said that the court must leave Versailles, it was saying that Henry IV. had in vain founded the greatness of his kingdom on the ruins of Spain, that Richelieu had in vain shed the blood of the aristocracy, that when Louis succeeded these two great men, his life had been an idle struggle against destiny, that all history was a fallacy, and that the labours of four generations which had borne the heavy yoke of despotism, the lives which had fallen in civil tumults, or perished in foreign wars, were all useless, and had neither advanced, by a single step, the affairs of France, nor of the moral world. But human struggles do not terminate thus. Centuries never turn backward; but, like brave combatants,

fall in the place assigned them by omnipotence, and expire with their face to the future, never to the past. Louis XIV. was destined to finish his career at Versailles. It was not for France to be dismembered by a foreign hand; and in the fulness of time, when the sovereign power was to be banished from Versailles, it was no foreign foe who was decreed to direct the enemy's fire, under which the monarchy was to fall. The instant Louis XIV. heard the cry of alarm uttered by his courtiers, he at once understood their fears, and contemned them. He declared he would not stir from Versailles, and that battle was the only answer he would give to his insolent enemies: but, though he did not quit the palace, he stripped it a second time of its riches; and, as he had done in 1638, he sent to the mint all his valuables, and demanded the same sacrifice from the lords of his court. He then ordered Villars, who was in disgrace, to go and take command of the armies in Flanders. Villars replied in the true spirit of boasting, which his conduct did not belie, "Adieu, Sire; I am going to fight your enemies, and I leave you in the midst of mine." "Go, Marshal," said the king, embracing him. "Should fortune prove adverse, I will assemble all my troops, put myself at the head of the nobility, make the last struggle by your side, and either save the state or perish in its ruins."

While war devastated our provinces, the court was a prey to other discords—it was no longer the rival-

ship of mistresses, but that of priests which troubled Versailles. Tellier, the king's confessor, not content with having caused the destruction of the Jansenists, was plotting some new cabal which might complete the fortune of the jesuists, by rendering them the arbiters of the catholic faith in France. He extorted the famous bull *Unigenitus* from Clement XI., condemning the "Moral Reflections" of father Quesnel. The king having received the bull gave it the force of law, and commanded it to be registered in all the courts of parliament throughout the kingdom. These courts, which Louis in his youth had deprived of the privilege of protesting, now took courage to declare that it was neither conformable to the spirit of the French clergy, nor to the received opinions; and they refused to register it unless modified.

Tellier wished the king to hold a bed of justice to oblige the parliament of Paris to submit; but the king preferred sending for the principal members, and speaking with them. The greater part were sold to the jesuits; but France had her eyes on the attorney-general d'Agnesseau, the best informed magistrate of the kingdom, and a man of the strictest integrity. D'Agnesseau had not so much courage as probity; and his wife, fearing he would be intimidated by the presence of the monarch, said, in embracing him, "Go, forget everything, wife, children, all but honour." The attorney-general spoke so eloquently that Louis gave up his intended

interference. Tellier was exasperated, and wanted the king to suspend d'Agnesseau, chastise the parliament, and imprison the Cardinal de Nouailles, Archbishop of Paris, and a zealous supporter of the jansenists. Mademoiselle Chausseraie, however, whom the king had taken in affection, and who gave him the amusement which the growing austerity of Madame de Maintenon could not afford him, overthrew the whole by a few words of her woman's wit, under the appearance of the greatest indifference to politics. But the flame was kindled. The parliaments were roused, and having once baffled the great king, they did not scruple to resist his successors. The most mournful events occurred at the palace during these dissensions. The dauphin, only son of the king, died 14th April, 1711. The Duke of Burgundy then took the title of dauphin; but he did not long possess it. The Duchess of Burgundy was taken suddenly ill with a dreadful pain in her temples, in February, 1712. She thought herself poisoned with some tobacco which she took in secret; but the small-pox which was then raging in Paris, and at court, afforded a much clearer explanation. For some days she was in the greatest danger; and at length died on the 12th, in convulsions. The king witnessed her agony, and remained on his knees at the foot of the bed till her death. The court immediately set off for Marly; and the next day began to think of re-marrying the dauphin; but this young prince, on whom so many

had placed their hopes, was himself attacked with the same fatal disease, and died on the 18th, six days after his wife. Fenelon, exiled to Cambray, was not in time to see his pupil, although the king had permitted him to be sent for. The Duke of Bretagne, eldest son of the Duke of Burgundy, and who was only five years old, was named dauphin; but on the 8th of March he followed his father and mother to the tomb. The Duke d'Anjou (afterwards Louis XV.) was in the greatest danger, and was saved by Madame de Ventadour, his governess, having the breast again given him. The same hearse carried the father, mother, and child to the grave; and Paris saw this funereal cortège passing through its streets, as if bearing away the whole of that dynasty which was but a short time before so numerous, and so powerful.

Thus did Louis XIV. see in one year swept away the three generations of his successors to the throne; and his hopes were henceforth fixed on a single child whom crime or illness might easily carry off. Many did not hesitate to say that these deaths were the effect of poison; and some loudly accused the Duke of Orleans, the king's nephew, who, by the scandal of his life, and the effrontery of his sentiments, seemed to encourage their suspicions. Louis XIV., who foresaw all the chances of his one day ascending the throne, would not force him to exculpate himself of such a crime, and nothing was attempted either to diminish or augment these calumnies.

So many calamities and troubles shed over the last days of Louis a profound melancholy. His misfortunes were so severe that they banished the remembrance of the prosperity which had signalized the beginning of his reign; and it appeared as if heaven by these severities announced that it held no communion with his works of pride and tyranny. But he was yet allowed to see victory again descend upon his banners. Villars performed all that he had so boldly promised; and after having for some time contended with Eugene, he beat him in the field at Denain, the 24th July, retook all that he had taken, and then passed on to other fields of battle, was again victorious at Fribourg, penetrated into Germany, and won new conquests.

Marlborough's disgrace with Queen Anne released the king from this formidable adversary. Duguay-Trouin, and Jean Bart, made his name respected at sea; and Vendôme restored the Spanish throne to his grandson by the victory of Villaviciosa. Louis XIV. saw all these wars, which had so cruelly menaced him, happily at an end, in 1713, at the treaty of Utrecht, which acknowledged the royalty of Philip V., and imposed no other sacrifice on the French than the abolition of Dunkirk.

The conditions of peace were not so agreeable as advantageous to the king; his melancholy increased every day, and every day he was more difficult to amuse. It was determined then to introduce immediately the Persian ambassador, who had just arrived

as he said, to pay homage, on the part of the king, his master, to the greatest monarch in Christendom. Never did the king display more magnificence than on this occasion; he wore all the crown jewels, and it was not without emotion that this miserable old man was seen tottering on the brink of the grave adorned with all the pomp of his youth.

But those who were behind the scenes must have have felt a still deeper emotion than pity. The ambassador was a Portuguese jesuit. After travelling through most oriental kingdoms, particularly Persia, he was imprisoned by the Turks at Constantinople; his brethren released him, and instructed him in the part he was to play before Louis XIV. It was really piteous to see this great king become the dupe of these foolish tricks. Dipi, interpreter of the oriental languages, died suddenly between the day of the ambassador's arrival, and that of his audience of leave. A country curate, who was chosen to replace him, suspected that the Persian was nothing but an adventurer, and discovered all. The king, who had ordered the throne to be placed in the long gallery, had it removed in order that the interview should not take place. The ambassador was, however, allowed to depart quietly. The king daily appeared to get more enfeebled; but on the 9th of August, 1714, he followed the stag-hounds, in his caleche, which he drove himself. On Sunday, the 11th, he held a council, and walked in the gardens of Trianon; this was the last time he went out. He con-

tinued to transact business with his ministers till the 25th, the day of Saint Louis. About seven in the evening the musicians were preparing for the concert when he was taken ill. The physicians were summoned, who judged it necessary to administer the sacrament to the king.

On the news of the danger, the princes ran to the palace; on one side, the Duke of Orleans, whose rank entitled him to the Regency, and on the other, the Duke of Maine, in whose favour, at the request of Madame de Maintenon, the king had made a will which was not destined to be respected.

The servants, to whom the king had always been kind, were weeping at his feet. "Did you think," said he, "that I was immortal?" Then looking at Madame de Maintenon, he said, "What consoles me in leaving you, is the hope that we shall meet again in eternity." Madame de Maintenon was silent, and left the room. When out of the chamber, she said, "See the rendezvous he gives me, that man has never loved anything but himself." She then set off for Saint Cyr. The jesuits hastened to prepare everything for the Duke of Maine's advantage, who had made them many promises, and also for Madame de Maintenon, who had done so much for them. Thus did these holy fathers, with the king's favorite and bastard, conspire against the state. Father Tellier, occupied with these intrigues, absented himself from the sick bed. In his lucid intervals, Louis inquired for his confessor, and re-

marked with anger, "Had I followed the advice of my children, I should have had my confessor with me till the last." He was also hurt at the absence of Madame de Maintenon; and impatiently expected her; during the whole time they were gone to fetch her from Saint Cyr, he was very uneasy: but at last she came. The king reproached her with her indifference. She excused herself by saying, "I went to join my prayers with those of my children at Saint Cyr." So long as the king was sensible, he showed great courage. When all hope was over, he had two caskets brought, from which he drew many papers that were burned immediately; from another, he took the plan of the Castle of Vincennes, and sent it to Cavoie, the ranger, to prepare apartments for the *young king*—these were his words. He then sent for this prince, who was not yet six years old, and addressed him in the following terms:—"My dear child, you will soon be the king of a great nation; what I most urgently recommend is, never forget the duties you owe to God. Strive to preserve peace with your neighbours. I have loved war too much; do not imitate me in that, neither in the too great expenses I have incurred. Always seek advice, and endeavour to follow the best. Relieve your people to the utmost of your power, and do what I have been unable to do myself."

The last sufferings of the king were long, and gave him an opportunity to evince his strength of mind. During the eight days of their continuance

the court was always assembled in the gallery behind his chamber: the physicians and personal attendants were the only people in the ante-room. The ministers, secretaries of state, princes and princesses of the blood, remained in the room adjoining the gallery, and only came forward when his majesty asked for them, which was not often. It was there they were informed of the king's death on the 1st of September, 1715, at a quarter past eight in the morning. As soon as he had expired, the first gentleman of the bedchamber opened the window, and cried out three times, "The king is dead!" then he broke his baton, took another, and exclaimed, "Long live the king." At the same time, the hands of the palace clock were fixed at the hour in which the king had expired, and were to remain unmoved till the death of his successor.

On the 9th of September, the remains of Louis XIV. were carried to St. Denis. The pomp of his funeral was disturbed by the clamours of the people; tents had been pitched on the road to St. Denis; they drank, they sang, they laughed. It was with joy unalloyed by the slightest regret that the people saw the car which bore the body of the great king move slowly by. The crowd declared that the houses of the jesuits ought to be set on fire with the torches carried in the procession. Massillon, who had for some time filled at court the place of Bourdaloue, pronounced the eulogium of Louis the Great. The mob also, after their manner, yelled a funeral oration over his tomb.

CHAPTER XI.

Itinerary of Louis XIV.—Relations between monarchy and its edifice —Dubois—Cardinal Fleury—New queen of Versailles—Duke de Bourbon—Louis XV.—Conspiracy of monkeys—Depravity of the king—Madame de la Tournelle—Madame de Châteauroux.

Louis XIV. had himself written the itinerary to be followed by those who visited his palace. He had traced the walks they were to take, the places where they were to stop; he knew how each view was to be taken, and what associations would arise on such a site; and he would have his miracle seen in proper order, that all might be impressed with adequate ideas of the majesty residing therein. Now, we traverse the same places with far different thoughts than the pride of Louis suggested. To observe at the Versailles of to-day nothing but the splendour of royalty, would be to take but a side view of its destiny. The monument of a power and

glory unequalled, this palace was also the scene of sad reverses; and the eighteenth century gives a history which was little expected by the seventeenth.

If the great king did not foresee the events which changed the aspect of his palace, it was he, nevertheless, who prepared them. He had unwittingly laid in its foundations the seeds of those evils which were to spring up at a later period.

Thus, in the monument which had been reared to eternalize the glory of the monarchy, are found traces that suit days of mourning and decline. Versailles furnishes pictures for every phase of fortune. It is impossible to contemplate any part of this superb palace without seeing the epoch of its history.

Who has ever passed before the orangery, and not been struck with astonishment at the sight of the stair-case which incloses it within its gigantic arms, and which alone is as large as a palace. Stopping at the foot of those stairs I did not contemplate their enormous magnitude. My mind, ever seeking ideas, viewed something beyond a mere mountain of stone. This monumental *perron* presented the image of royalty. There were two flights—both the entire height of the hill, one ascending, the other descending: the first appears to rise up to heaven, the other seems on the contrary to be reared only for the purpose of reconducting the adventurous climbers to the bottom. Royalty has also two roads, one which exalts it above all human power, the other

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E. Radclyffe.

The Orangery at Versailles

which drags it to an equality with the most perishable things of earth; one that conducts it to the height of prosperity, the other that plunges it into the abyss of nothingness. At the time we are now speaking of, royalty had commenced its descent down this mystic path. Three steps had marked that ascent. Mazarin consolidated the foundation by his triumphs, and by the treaty of the Pyrenees; Colbert added strength by peace and the fruits arising from it; Louvois gave it glory by his victories; and on these Louis reared his palace as if to mark the extreme point to which it could rise. Three steps also mark its decline — the Regency, the reign of Louis XV., and that of Louis XVI. precipitating it again into the vortex of revolutions from which Mazarin had drawn it. This type may again be traced in the orangery — each flight is divided into three parts. Nothing that is written on the surface of the earth is without its meaning. When the great king breathed his last, the genius of royalty uttered a cry which continued increasing until it was stifled by the throes of the revolution. Louis XIV. had made a will nominating the Duke of Maine regent, during the minority of Louis XV. But the will of the king, which, during his life-time, had been more respected than the laws of God, was after his death unheeded. The Duke of Orleans being proclaimed regent, gave another blow to the endeavours of Louis XIV. After having conducted the young king to Vincennes, he re-established the

seat of the government in Paris. Monarchy thus emerged from its solitude into the light of day. The curtain of forests behind which it had been sheltered was now thrown open. Its seat was now in the midst of a great city, with the people overlooking its movements; and that one step from its magnificent solitude decided its fate—for absolute power is impossible in a public situation. So the fate of Versailles was that of monarchy. Built to lodge the latter in its greatest splendour, the palace became a desert when it neglected the conditions: it was fated, however, to receive its royal guests again, not in their glory, but hiding in its asylum their shame and their weakness.

But who at length brought back the court from Paris to Versailles? Who replaced royalty in its magnificent solitude? Who took on himself the power of acting up to the wishes of the great king? It was a valet who had become both minister and cardinal, whose name was Dubois. This infamous wretch owed his greatness to the education of the Duke of Orleans, whose mind he ornamented, while he depraved his manners. He had experienced two singular events in his life: in the first place, although the vilest of men, he replaced Fenelon, who was the most virtuous, at Cambray; and in the second place he entered as a sovereign into the palace of Louis XIV., he whom some years before, no man of good society would have accepted as his footman. History is filled with such contrasts, as if to show

how easy it is for the weak to acquire power; and to prove to the powerful how empty is that rank which may be obtained by the lowest.

Two motives instigated Dubois to remove the king to the palace of Louis XIV. Jealous of all the profligate characters about the Regent, who endeavoured to ingratiate themselves into his favour by means of the creatures of the Palais Royal, he wished to diminish the number of the court, and thought that many who frequented it at Paris, could not follow to Versailles, or would by degrees, lose the habit of doing so. His second reason was, that he desired to give the king a jesuit for his confessor. The Cardinal de Noailles, Archbishop of Paris, and the acknowledged chief of Jansenism, refused to admit the jesuits into his diocese; but Dubois, in his turn, outwitted the Cardinal, by conducting the king to Versailles, and thence sending him to confess at St. Cyr, in the diocese of Chartres, where the jesuits had power. It was curious enough that Louis should come to seek a confessor in the palace which was to be so shortly abandoned to his mistresses.

In 1723, Louis XV. being fourteen, declared himself major; and left Versailles to be *sacré* at Rheims, returning afterwards to his palace, followed by the Duke of Orleans and Dubois, to whom he continued the public administration of affairs. But they did not long keep it: they both died shortly after; the Cardinal blaspheming against his former excesses, which destroyed him so soon,

and the other carried off by apoplexy, in the midst of dissipations which his broken health had not been able to make him renounce.

A man then arose at court, whose appearance was mean, compared with all the haughty and depraved splendour of Louis XIV. The Cardinal Fleury was not fitted to reign at Versailles: modest even to timidity, economical to sordidness, peaceable to cowardice, slow, old, and fearful in every thing, he seemed quite unsuited to command in the most ostentatious palace in the world, which so many fêtes and victories had consecrated. Almoner to the king, he had been appointed by him to the bishopric of Frejus, which resigned in 1715, on pretence of his great age, and his bad state of health; but nothing prevented him from accepting the office of preceptor to the young king, in which he was sure that his ambition would at last be satisfied.

Although seventy years of age, he was not in haste to profit by his fortune, and when, by the death of the Duke of Orleans, he might have been created prime minister, he caused the Duke of Bourbon, grandson to the Great Condé, to be appointed. The Duke of Bourbon, proud of his power, imagined it to belong to himself alone, without even suspecting that of the Cardinal. He carried himself with the greatest haughtiness at Versailles, established himself in the chamber where the Duke of Orleans died, and assumed so admirably well all

the semblance of power, that the courtiers flocked to his ante-room, waiting his presence. All this time, the Cardinal Fleury, shut up in a little badly furnished room, did not alter his manners in any way; but in the council, he always took care to be with the king when the Duke came to pay his court, under pretence of transacting business; and he did not withdraw for an instant during these interviews, though maintaining a respectful silence.

The queen of Versailles, during the Duke of Bourbon's ministry, was the Marchioness de Prie, his mistress. Beautiful, and intelligent, but as deceitful as she appeared innocent, violent, under an air of gentleness, and of the most depraved character, this woman, assisted by the rich banker, Paris, meddled with the affairs of state, and secured for herself a pension of £40,000, sterling, that was paid by England to Dubois. It was by her advice, that the Duke of Bourbon, to make friends, held an installation of the Knights of the Holy Ghost; she herself furnishing the list of names, although there were sixty-one places vacant, of which the Regent had not disposed, because he had promised many beyond that number. The chapel of Versailles was the place fixed on for this ceremony, where all the pomp and luxury after the traditions and manners of feudalism were got up for the occasion.

The Duke of Bourbon trembled lest he should lose his power; the slightest indisposition of the

king made him shudder. He slept under the royal apartment, and one night, fancying he heard a greater noise than usual, rose hastily, and rushed up trembling with fear to the king. Marechal, first surgeon of the household, who slept in the ante-chamber, was surprised to see him at such an hour, and asked the cause of his fright. The Duke, beside himself, answered with hesitation, "I heard a noise—the king is ill—What will become of me?" Marechal with difficulty assured him nothing was the matter, and begged him to go to bed; but in conducting him back to his room, he heard him muttering to himself, "I shall not be easy;—if he recovers, I must get him married."

There was a plan already formed for the king's marriage. A princess of Spain, still a child, had been sent to, and brought up at Versailles as its future queen, but she was not yet old enough, and the Duke of Buorbon, in haste to marry the king, sent the princess back without any ceremony, and sought for a woman who from gratitude would always be in his interest. At that time, the unfortunate king of Poland was a wanderer, banished from his throne, when Charles XII. could no longer support him on it. It was in the half-ruined castle of Weissembourg, that Stanislaus Leczinski received a private letter from the duke, who informed him he had fixed his choice on his family. He instantly went to his wife and daughter, and

said, "Let us fall on our knees and thank God." "Oh, my father!" exclaimed his daughter, "you are recalled to the Polish throne!" "No, my child," replied the father, "Heaven is much more auspicious—you are Queen of France!"

Perhaps Cardinal Fleury would have been contented with the secret influence he possessed, had not the Duke of Bourbon, by his wish to deprive him of it, forced the Cardinal to exert it in his own defence. The duke was exiled to Chantilly, and the Marchioness de Prie banished to her estate of Courbe-Epine, where she died about fifteen months after, of an illness which was just starting into fashion—a *nervous* complaint, that always followed the *vapours*. Henceforth, the Bishop of Frejus openly enjoyed the king's favour, but he did not use it with ostentation, which was foreign to his habits; he suppressed the title of prime minister, and contented himself with the authority, which for seventeen years he employed to economize and maintain the peace of Europe, by which means, France was enabled to restore its treasure that the lavish expenditure of the preceding reign had completely exhausted. The project of a universal peace which the Abbé de Saint Pierre had circulated, and which Dubois called "a good man's dream," seemed the principle of the new minister; but Fleury did not understand that it is only with arms in the hand, that peace can be preserved. Too honest to be pensioned by the English, whose

power was every day increasing at our expense, he became their dupe. He neglected the navy. France, intoxicated with voluptuousness, required a strong hand to drag it from its lethargic indolence; and the mildness of the old cardinal only augmented the general lassitude, and greatly contributed to the corruption of the regency.

Those principles of policy which had actuated Louis XIV. were by degrees abandoned by the government of his successor. The palace could perceive the change. Louis XIV. had inhabited the centre, but after his death, his suite of rooms was untenanted, as if no one could replace him, and this was true enough. The palace, therefore, appeared without a master, and the monarchy, like it, was an enormous body, possessing a magnificent exterior, but wanting heart and soul to animate it. The new king had his apartments in the right wing of the marble court; where his grandfather's cabinets had been placed. His bed-room was the billiard-room of Louis XIV., and the same in which Chamillart had played his way to fortune.

In leaving the centre of the palace, to inhabit one of its sides, Louis XV. portrayed the change which monarchy had undergone. Things seemingly the most insignificant, frequently point to the most important events. The king, accustomed from his infancy not to consider himself as the centre of the government, never took a principal part in the affairs of state, but left them to his

ministers; and when any project failed, he said, quietly, "Well, they thought they acted for the best."

During the first years of his reign, the king cared for nothing but hunting, which he enjoyed often at Rambouillet, the Count de Toulouse's seat, with the young men of his own age, whom Fleury had placed near him, as too insignificant to fear. The familiarity which they enjoyed with the king however, induced them to try and seize the reins of government. Fleury laughed in pity, and sent them to ripen in their own fields. This conspiracy was called, "The conspiracy of monkeys." Nevertheless, it became necessary for the Cardinal's interest to have some person of confidence about the king, and as the queen was not friendly to him, he thought of giving her lord a mistress. He discovered that Madame de Mailly, the queen's lady in waiting, loved the king, whose personal attractions were equal to those of Louis XIV. She was clever, capable of inspiring love, of an age to declare it; and though neither beautiful nor pretty, she possessed in a superior degree the art of the toilette. Introduced as if by accident to the king's room, she placed her feet on the dog-iron, and showed a portion of her leg, which was very beautiful. "How very cold it is!" said she at last. "I should think so," replied the king, "you do not cover yourself enough." This first conversation was so little satisfactory to her, that it was with diffi-

culty she could be induced to try a second. She did so, however, and it was conclusive: she became the king's mistress.

This was the signal for the beginning of the licentiousness of Louis XV.; the most disgusting that has ever sullied the pages of history.

Madame Mailly's two sisters, Madame de Vintimille and the Duchess of Lauraguais, enjoyed the king's favour without supplanting her. Madame de Vintimille died in her confinement, and Madame de Lauraguais had not sufficient attractions to detain him. Madame de Mailly again possessed his affections, and flattered herself that she should long enjoy them; but she was once more robbed of them by another sister, Madame la Tournelle, who would share them with no one.

The king's mistresses had not, hitherto, interfered with state affairs; they had allowed the cardinal to conduct these as he liked; and had only thought of enlivening the king's constitutional melancholy, and inspiring every taste which could disincline him from study, in order that no recollection might interrupt the pleasures they introduced,—"the small apartments and the *petits soupers*." Louis, who hated parade, yielded to this, and had constructed, behind all his large apartments, boudoirs voluptuously furnished, where he might more easily abandon himself to his vices. Louis XIV. had carried the air of majesty into his convivial parties, and when he fêted his favourites, was still

the king. Louis XV., on the contrary, placed his happiness in making his mistresses forget his rank; and amused himself by undoing his grandfather's work. Thus were the magnificent apartments of Versailles disfigured in order to make boudoirs or rather *dens* in which Louis XV. drained to the very dregs the cup of debauchery. Notwithstanding all the changes it had undergone, Versailles soon became a subject of annoyance. The king could not move without beholding traces of his grandfather's greatness; and he determined on seeking another residence, where he should not be followed by these images. He bought on the other side of the Seine, the Chateau de Choisy, and ornamented it according to his taste.

As Versailles had been an epitome of Louis XIV., so was Choisy one of Louis XV.: Versailles was a monarchical poem—Choisy an erotic one. There were large and small apartments as before; and every accommodation and allurement to pleasure were sedulously arranged. The ground floor was fitted up for nocturnal orgies of the most infamous description; and in order to have no one to blush for them, attendance was dispensed with. Tables rose from the offices below ready prepared with every delicacy that could stimulate the weariness of excess.

It was for Madame de la Tournelle, that Louis XV. had completed the decorations of Choisy; but this young woman was not inclined to pass her life

in such a place. She was bewitchingly beautiful, of an elegant figure, with the most killing eyes, engaging manners, and a seducing smile. But under this prepossessing appearance she concealed greater pride and determination than many men of that period. She was not content with merely amusing, but was bent on governing the king. She made her conditions; insisted on Madame de Mailly being sent away; on receiving the title and honours attached to the Duchess of Châteauroux,—and she obtained all she wanted. When assured of her power over the king, she endeavoured to rouse him from the lethargy in which he was plunged.

The Emperor, Charles VI., had died about three years before, leaving an only daughter and heiress, Maria Theresa, who became immediately Queen of Hungary; but whom the German princes refused to nominate to the empire. Cardinal Fleury was anxious that France should have nothing to do with these quarrels; but being unable to resist the wishes of the court, he sent the Count of Belle Isle, Fouquet's grandson, with full power to nominate to the empire. The Elector of Bavaria was elected under the title of Charles VII., January 24, 1742, and France promised to support his election, in concert with the King of Prussia. Belle Isle then went from the diet to head the army, and while Frederick was taking Silesia from Austria, he defeated the Austrian army at Saix; but when Frederick had secured

what he wanted, he retreated, leaving Belle Isle amidst a whole nation of enemies. He shut himself up in Prague, but was obliged to quit it soon after, making a retreat so skilful, that it has been compared to that of the 10,000 under Xenophon.

Cardinal Fleury died of grief at having undertaken this war. He left in the ministry the two brothers D'Argenson, who were determined to carry on the war with as much vigour as Louis XIV. himself could have done, when the house of Austria was at its height of power. They sacrificed every thing to the political views of that monarch, and when the English threw off the mask, and joined the Imperialists, they declared war both against them and Maria Theresa, in 1744. Madame de Châteauroux was the soul of this enterprize. She wanted to make a hero of her lover. As soon as the campaign opened, she induced him to leave Versailles, and forced him to witness the glory of Ypres, Menin, Furnes, and the strong fort of Knoques, falling into the hands of Maurice Saxe, who had given France the assistance of his good fortune. Suddenly, Alsace was besieged by the Prince Charles of Lorraine; and Madame de Châteauroux carried thither Louis XV. But unused to so much fatigue, the king fell dangerously ill; his life was despaired of; and the court, lavishing terms of fondness upon him, uttered maledictions upon the woman who had by her influence drawn him from his palace and his debaucheries. Re-

stored to health, the king paid little attention to the promises which had been extorted from him by his confessor, and insisted on seeing his mistress: but she died suddenly, before leaving Versailles; some persons attributing her death, although it was really natural, to poison. Had she lived, would she have succeeded in imparting to the king some energy of character, some nobility of mind?

After her death, he plunged into riot and debauchery, which showed the cancerated state of a mind destined to cover the male sex with the opprobrium of a new Messalina. Versailles henceforth was a sink of impurity, which, if we would avoid contamination, we must beware of approaching too near.

CHAPTER XII.

An adventure—Madame de Pompadour—Philosophy and literature—Voltaire and Louis XV.—Encyclopedia—Melancholy of the king—Parc-aux-cerfs—Damiens—Choiseul—Death of Madame de Pompadour.

One day there arrived at Versailles a young countrywoman in the greatest disorder, to beg the king's protection from the fury of her husband, to whom she had given just grounds for anger.

Her mother, Madame Poisson, who was kept by M. Lenormaud de Tournehem, a former general, had put it in the girl's head that she was fit for a king; and, although this person had married her daughter to the nephew of her protector, M. Lenormaud d'Elioles, she had neglected no occasion of throwing her in the king's way. At a ball given at the Hôtel Deville, 1744, to celebrate the dauphin's marriage, some months after the death of the Duchess de Châteauroux, the king was followed by a mask, and recognised the young woman whom he had so constantly met, even when hunting in the forest of Senart. She immediately mixed with the

crowd, the king in his turn following. The pretty mask dropped her handkerchief, and the king picked it up, and with the utmost grace threw it to her over the heads of the crowd. Every body remarked that "the handkerchief was thrown"—which was true. A few days after she had a rendezvous in the street Croix-des Petits-Champs, in a house to which the king entered by a door that opened into the street Des Bons Enfans. It was from this place she first came to Versailles, where the king at first pretended to protect her from her husband; but she soon rose to that distinguished rank of infamy hitherto occupied only by women of birth. Madame d'Etioles was created Marchioness de Pompadour, by letters patent, in 1745; she took the arms of the family, and received a pension of 240,000 livres. She occupied the room under that of the king—the same inhabited by Madame de Montespan, in the last years of her favour, which were the first of the palace being the residence of the king. This was not the only resemblance, for they both presided over the most active years of their respective lovers. But Louis XIV. never allowed Madame de Montespan the influence which Louis XV. gave to Madame de Pompadour. Even Madame de Maintenon never possessed the power which Madame Poisson's daughter enjoyed.

The marchioness's favour commenced in the heat of the patriotic movement which was begun by the d'Argensons; and, as if Louis still preserved

something of the excitement given to him by the Duchess de Châteauroux, he would be present on the field. In 1745, he made the campaign of Fontenoy, with the dauphin; and was accompanied thither by Madame de Pompadour, who soon prevailed upon him to return to his palace, which he never again left to reap honour in the field.

The Marèchal de Saxe, and Lowendal gained victories which established peace in 1748, at Aix-la-Chapelle, and which placed France in a position with regard to Europe, from which she ought never to have descended. This was the last sigh of Louis XIV.'s policy. The credit of the Argensons had prepared it, and they were the last ministers faithful to the spirit which the monarchy had ever preserved in its foreign relations. The Marquis d'Argenson, minister for foreign affairs, was dismissed before the peace was concluded. His brother, the minister at war, avoided this disgrace by entering into fewer projects.

If Fleury during his ministry allowed the military spirit of the nation to languish, he had seen in the intellectual world such daring minds arise as might have seemed to possess all the courage formerly confined to the field of battle. The literature of the "great age," full of imagination and grandeur, was followed by that which, although less learned, and less majestic, was far more lively. Philosophical satire now spread where religious faith was before; and was fraught with results of which it

was itself ignorant. It was under the name of materialism that the new era of thought was announced.

These men formed, as it were, a different monarchy under that of Louis XIV. Voltaire was the acknowledged sovereign of the new empire. Under him his rivals, or his disciples, had different departments: Montesquieu, that of laws; D'Alembert, that of science; Diderot, that of arts and industry. All these, and many besides, but little known a few years back, had now on their side public opinion, success, and fame. France and Europe were inundated with their tragedies, their pamphlets, their poems, their prefaces, their memoirs, their romances, their dictionaries; their ideas developed themselves under a thousand different forms. Their power was so tremendous that Diderot felt the necessity of concentrating it. As conquerors treat a people they have subjugated, he imposed a new code of laws in his empire, and dedicated the first part of the Encyclopædia to d'Argenson.

Louis XIV. founded his monarchy at Versailles; the regent, after his death, exposed it to public view, by removing its seat to Paris; and the people, before whose judgment it was then brought, set up a new monarchy against it. But the new power was not content with reigning in Paris, it must find its way to Versailles; and Madame de Pompadour took it under her care. She was the first and most cherished victim of the satirical spirit of the time; epigrams, caricatures, verses, and bons mots were

made on her without end. She was terrible in her revenge. The minister, Maurepas, was exiled for a stanza. Latude, whose name alone presents an image of cruelty was imprisoned for a bon mot. But with the philosophers she was not so difficult; she courted them in every way, and ended by extracting some verses from them in her favour. Voltaire appeared at Versailles in the quality of gentleman of the chamber. The shade of the great king might well have shuddered to see this illustrious scoffer, who not content, as Molière was, with quizzing the nobility, and at the same time making them laugh, turned the bitterness of his wit and sarcasm against all power, human and divine. Louis himself, notwithstanding his promises to Madame de Pompadour, could not help receiving him with coldness. As the court was leaving the theatre, after a ballet called "Trajan," of which Voltaire was the author, he approached the king and said, "Well; is Trajan content?" The king replied only with a haughty smile.

Madame de Pompadour, forgetting the change of the age, wished the king to patronize literature as Louis XIV. had done; but especially she wanted him to honour Voltaire. In answer to her on this subject he said, "I have treated him as well as Louis XIV. did Racine and Bolieau; I have given him a situation fit for a private gentleman, and a pension. It is no fault of mine if he pretends to be chamberlain, to wear a cross, and to sup with the king. It is not the fashion in France;

and, as there are many other beaux esprits and greater numbers of nobility than in Prussia, I should require an immense table to hold them all." Then, counting on his fingers, "Maupertuis, Fontenelle, Lamotte, Voltaire, Piron, Destouches, Montesquieu, the Cardinal Polignac"—some one observed,

"Your Majesty has omitted D'Alembert, and Clairaut"—

"And Crébillon," said he, "and La Chaussée."

"And Crébillon's son," added another; "he is still more amiable than his father. And there are also the Abbé Prévot, and the Abbé Dolivert."

"Well," said the king,—"and the whole set for these twenty-five years would have dined and supped with me!" Some years after, these men whom Louis XV. did not find sufficiently good to admit to his table, had replaced the monarchy.

The Encyclopædia, proscribed at court, had a representative at Versailles, who introduced ideas into the royal mind, of which they were far from calculating the result. Quesnay, father of the economists, was the physician in ordinary to the king, and enjoyed his confidence. Louis was fond of talking with him, and hearing his doctrine of the wealth of the people, which in reality, contained the germs of a revolution; although the king thought them only ingenious and innocent speculations. He called him a thinker, gave him a patent of nobility, and three violets for his arms with this motto—"propter cogitationem mentis." Quesnay

gathered around him many disciples, considered as dreamers; among the most remarkable of whom was Mirabeau, whose son shook the monarchy. At Versailles, the name was often repeated with a contemptuous smile—that name, the very mention of which was to make its walls totter to their foundation. The future was already seen and foretold; but Madame de Pompadour said, "after us the deluge;" and she cared little for monarchy or philosophy. She was remarkably talented; but wanted other admirers than the insipid lords of the court. She loved the arts, and to be surrounded with those who cultivated them. She wrought equally well with the pencil and chisel, and engraved with her own hand the principal scenes of her time. She had a fine voice, sonorous and extensive, and excelled in the concerts given by her at court, assisted by the first artists of the day.

The Queen, who did not attend these concerts, begged the Marchioness, when she one day brought her flowers from the King, to sing. She excused herself; but the Queen changed the request into an order. The Marchioness dared no longer refuse, but began immediately the famous monologue of Armida. The first words of which are—

"Enfin il est en ma puissance"—

"At length he is in my power"—The Queen turned pale with anger.

Madame Pompadour was fond of taking part in the drama. She formed a party of theatricals, at which the most distinguished at court sought to be admitted. She had a stage fitted up, and the first piece performed was "The Prodigal Child," of Voltaire; but he was only at the second representation. This stage was not large enough for Madame de Pompadour's ambition; she wanted a theatre for acting, and an opera for her beautiful voice.

Splendid fêtes had been given at Versailles, and the greatest poets of the eighteenth century had worked for them; Molière wrote his comedies for the palace; but he was only allowed in the gardens. Louis XIV. had danced in the ballets; but it never entered into his mind to place pleasures on an equality with politics, and to erect a theatre that was altogether devoted to Majesty. It was reserved for Madame Pompadour to overthrow those notions. Not content with one, she had two theatres, on the same floor with the chapel, which remained between them. Thus did two women, who possessed the greatest influence, leave monuments of their different characters. Madame de Maintenon built a chapel, Madame de Pompadour erected two theatres. Madame de Pompadour was an accomplished actress; she was the person who would have invented rouge, patching, powder, musk, if they had not been all in vogue before her time. She had nothing natural, except the want of always changing

her appearance; she was continually decorating her person; and her beauty was admirably adapted to her fancies. She could at pleasure appear imposing, or playful; haughty, or humble; beautiful, or pretty. To wit and beauty she joined also the gift of tears; and knew when to be sentimental or sorrowful. She would have made the fortune of a theatrical man, had she not been mistress to the king. She would have enacted to perfection any character, not perhaps to the life, but in the taste of her time; which she possessed in a superior degree, and which to-day is called *rococo*.

But, it was necessary to amuse the king, whose melancholy increased, and whose excesses made the reaction more painful. If they told him any thing amusing, he hardly listened. His conversation was of deaths and funerals. When he passed a burial ground, he sent a servant to know if there were any new graves. When any one had a cold, he exclaimed, "You have a dreadful cough; it tells of the coffin."

Hunting one day, he met a man carrying a coffin; it was when bread was very dear. "Where are you carrying that?" said the King.

"To the village;" replied the peasant.

"Is it for a man, or a woman?"

"For a man."

"Of what did he die?"

"Of hunger;" said the man abruptly. The

King asked no more questions, but put spurs to his horse.

Madame de Pompadour had the greatest difficulty to amuse this man; but, when she could no longer please as a mistress, she continued to be useful as a friend. She had a hermitage built in the forest leading to Saint Germain; which had the appearance of a farm, although ornamented with the greatest luxury—with pictures, statues, and everything that could excite the attention. The gardens were not laid out in the formality of Le Nôtre, but in winding, umbrageous walks, well adapted for repose and love. In the middle there was a bosquet of roses, in which was an Adonis in white marble; and, all around, myrtles, jessamines, fountains, alleys, and terraces, arranged in the most perfect taste. It was here the Marchioness often received the king. When she had fixed the rendezvous, she went on before; and he surprised her disguised as a shepherdess, sometimes as a sister of charity, one day as a gardener, another as an abbess, often a milk-maid, offering the king warm milk from the cow. And, when the paleness of her lips showed she could no longer continue these pleasures, she had herself replaced here, that she might not be replaced at Versailles.

This was the Parc-aux-cerfs, in which, at first, his subaltern mistresses went under feigned names; but, in the end, it was no longer mistresses, but victims who were imprisoned there; for Madame Pom-

padour, always dreading that some rival should spring up in this infamous place, caused children to be kidnapped from Paris for the King's sensuality.

While Louis XV. reigned over the Parc-aux-cerfs, Madame de Pompadour governed France. It was not enough for her to administer to the pleasures of the King; but, in concert with the Cardinal de Bernis, who had gained her good opinion by dint of flattery, she imagined a system that was to give a new turn to affairs. It was the final overthrow of the policy of Louis XIV.; and, by signing the treaty of Versailles, she allied France with Austria, which, till then, had always been its enemy. A letter from Maria Theresa, who called her friend, and a bon mot of Frederick, who said that her favour was the reign of Cotillon, had been sufficient to work this change. Thus in 1755 the seven years' war began; and the English, ever among the enemies of France, now leagued with Prussia, as they had before done with Austria.

The King had lost much of his popularity. The fifth of January, 1757, as he was going into the court of marble, he was stopped at the door by a man who plunged a sword into his body. The assassin was instantly taken; his name was Damiens. He was carried to Paris, condemned, and suffered the most dreadful torments which refined barbarity could suggest. The nation was not so much affected by his death as by his crime. It was astonished that the majesty with which Louis XIV.

had surrounded the king's person, had not been sufficient to protect his successor. And, after this attempt, nothing was left of the reality of the principles of Louis XIV.—men asked if monarchy was perishing?

The Duke de Choiseul had the boldness to imagine he could settle the government on the basis which Madame de Pompadour had furnished. It was a work of difficulty to change the springs of action worn out through time. Devoted to the favourite, a partisan of Voltaire, connected with parliament, he was the representative of a party which fancied royalty could be saved by imbuing it with the new doctrines. This connexion of the throne and philosophy was then attempted by all the European powers. Carvallo Pombal in Portugal, and the Marquis of Aranda in Spain were doing the same thing. It was the Duke de Choiseul who formed the famous family compact which bound the Bourbons of France, Spain, and Naples together. He joined the parliament in its hatred of the Jesuits, and instigated it to abolish them. The dissolution of their order was pronounced by the parliament of Paris, ratified by the crown, and confirmed by the wisdom of Pope Ganganelli. In a few years this order, which, at the beginning of the century, directed the consciences of kings, was in a few years banished from Europe.

The peace was concluded in 1763; and was as hurtful as the war had been. It finished the de-

struction of our navy; robbed us of our colonies; and gave the entire advantage to the English, as it secured to them the sovereignty of the sea. The Duke de Choiseul was obliged to accept it, and submit to the consequences entailed by Madame de Pompadour's policy, since he had accepted her presents. But she did not long survive this disgrace. The king's favour which was for a short time suspended after the attempt of Damiens, had been restored when he recovered. She enjoyed it to the last, although the illness that destroyed her had completely altered her beauty; when this was decared mortal, the king had her removed from Choisy, where she then was, to Versailles, and there she expired on the fifteenth of April, 1764, in the forty-seventh year of her age. As soon as she was dead, the corpse was taken from the palace. Louis XV. stood at the window to see it pass; and observed, it would reach Paris at ten o'clock.

The power of the Duke de Choiseul outlived his benefactress, and the government continued to act on the same principles. He endeavoured to regain in the eyes of the rest of Europe, a situation of respect, and to infuse some energy into the monarchy; and in order to repair as much as possible the colonial losses sustained during the last war, he annexed Corsica to France. His plans were extensive. He foresaw the colossal power which Russia would one day attain, and endeavoured to oppose a barrier to it by protecting Poland.

But monarchy would not be regenerated; and the minister whom one mistress had raised, was overthrown by a fresh one, in order to stamp with ineffable disgrace the condition into which royalty had sunk.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Duke of Richelieu—Royal amusements—Vulgarity of a king—Cookery of Louis XV.—Madame Dubarry—Ministerial changes—Illness and death of the king.

THERE was an architect, who had gained his reputation by some important works, whose name was Gabriel. He constructed the two colonnades of the place de la Concorde, and so gained the king's confidence; who deputed him to erect the opera at Versailles, in which Madame de Pompadour was to exert her beautiful voice. But his ambition was not satisfied with that; he wanted to re-model the palace. And, certainly, with some show of reason; for the palace built by Louis XIV. could not suit Louis XV.—raised to lodge royalty, it was not suited to pander to libertinism. Mansard reared it for a great king; Gabriel wanted to accommodate it to the vices of his successor; and to change

the palace as the monarchy, of which it was the type, had been changed. But he could not finish his plans; scarcely had he added one new wing to the marble court. The hour was come—and nothing more could be accomplished at Versailles.

At the beginning of the century we saw the Duke de Fronsac playing with the Duchess of Burgundy, in the small apartments of Madame de Maintenon; but now he is the Duke de Richelieu; and in him is consummated the decline of royalty. After having been protected by the prude Maintenon, he became the protector of all the favourites at court. Bearing the most illustrious name in France, he became the purveyor of the king's pleasures; and partook, with Lebel, his valet, the disgraceful and difficult office of pleasing his caprices. Voltaire painted this man a hero; and he was so after the models of that time. He was a duellist, a man of gallantry, courageous in battle even to temerity, an accomplished courtier, willing to serve his king at all risks, and indifferent whether it should be in honour or dishonour. It was Richelieu who was to choose some person to replace Madame de Pompadour at Versailles; but this was no easy task to execute. The king's degradation was so great that he looked upon the government only as a heavy burden, and had altogether separated his public and private character. He lent the name of king to ministers whom he did not even overlook; and the man seemed, in his

iniquitous industry to make up for the culpable idleness of the king.

He amused himself by mixing with the people, not for the purpose of discovering their miseries and relieving them; but to find excitement in their grosser pleasures. He frequented during several winters the balls — "*a bouts de chandelles*;" he attended at all the pic nics that the trades' people gave at Versailles, in a black domino; his greatest amusement was to be drawn in a *wheel-barrow*, some of his servants following him in masks. He went about the streets at night; and if he did not fight with the people as Nero did, it was because he was of a less pugilistic disposition.

From all these places he had acquired an immense number of vulgar expressions, that plainly indicated where he had past the night. Madame Campan relates, that being one day alone with Madame de Victoire, the king came in, and asked "where is Coche? As she did not understand, he repeated the question without her being any wiser. After he was gone, she asked Madame what he meant? She coolly told her, that, being the largest of his daughters, he called her by the pet name of *Coche;* while Madame Adelaide, was *Loque*, Madame Sophia, *Graille*, and Madame Louisa, *Chiffe*.

Every morning he went, by a private staircase, into Madame Adelaide's room, carrying with him the coffee he had been making in a kitchen constructed under his room, and arranged for him that

he might suit his own taste: this he called his laboratory. Madame Adelaide rang for Madame Victoire; who, in going to her sister's room, rang for Madame Sophia; who, in her turn, had to ring for Madame Louisa. The whole employment of the four princesses was to taste the king's cookery. They had no influence over him. Madame Louisa, little and crooked, was alone capable of exercising the least power. She had glimpses of nobility of mind that roused her ambition; but she took an extraordinary way to carry her point. She thought something great would astonish Louis XV.; and, in order to be powerful, she retired into a convent, and quitted her palace for a cell.

The Duke de Choiseul governed with absolute power; but different parties united to ruin him—the Jesuits, the courtiers, all those whom he had caused to be punished, made common cause against him. Richelieu, who was anxious to preserve his nephew from the vengeance of parliament, to whom Choiseul had delivered him, was the chief conspirator against him; and, in giving the King a new mistress, he succeeded in disgracing the minister. But, where had he to seek this new mistress? Madame Châteauroux was of the nobility; Madame de Pompadour, of the citizens; Madame Dubarry was from a gambling-house. She was born at Vaucouleurs, the birth-place of Joan of Arc, so that from the same place the most heroic and the vilest of women came. Her father was unknown; her mother was a

mantua-maker, and had married, after her birth, a clerk of the custom-house, called John Vaubernier, who gave his name to both mother and daughter. The last was brought up by her godfather, in the convent of Saint Anne; which she left to go to a milliner's in the Rue Saint Honore, where she began the impropriety of her conduct, frequently changing her abode and her name. After several disgraceful connexions, she was taken by Count Jean Dubarry, who kept a gambling-house, of which she was the queen; she drawing the gold, and he spending it. It was in this infamous place, that Lebel, the King's valet, saw her; and thought she was fitted for his purpose; and he was not long before he introduced her into the little apartments at Versailles. He presented her to the King as the wife of William Dubarry, brother to the Count. She was uncommonly beautiful, of an elegant figure, and had a lovely mouth, and magnificent hair. The king soon became so enamoured that Lebel thought he ought to tell him of the imposture before his passion was at its height—"So much the worse," said the King; "let her be married directly, before I do a foolish thing." There was not much difficulty in persuading William Dubarry, a fool and a drunkard, to fulfil the engagement made for him. The king put no bounds to his fondness, he persuaded Madame de Bearne to introduce her to court, and paid her a hundred thousand francs for so doing. By the princesses she was well received. She possessed a

self-confidence that gave her the air of a woman of good society. She invited all the lords of the court to sup with her; and, at the bottom of the invitations were the words—"the king honours me with his company."

This was the woman fixed on to ruin Choiseul, and his relation the Duke de Praslin. One day she sent away her cook because he was like the minister, and at night said to the King, "I have sent away my Choiseul; when will you send away yours?" Then she would take two oranges one in each hand, throw them up by turns, and cry; "jump, Choiseul; jump, Praslin!" The king was persuaded; and the 24th December, 1770, issued a lettre de cachet. The Duke's fall resembled a triumph; all the court followed him to his estate to show their respect, and Versailles was deserted.

Three new men then came into power. The Duke d'Arguillon, minister for foreign affairs, the Abbé Terray, comptroller of finance; and the Chancellor Maupeou, composed a triumvirate in the midst of the shouts of the nation, and to the great regret of the sincere friends of the monarchy. With the assistance of the Duke de Choiseul, parliament had overcome the Jesuits; they in their turn, assisted by Madame du Barry, conquered the parliament. Under the pretext of the Dubarrys being English, she bought a picture of Charles I. in London, and had it put in her boudoir opposite the sofa on which the king used to sit. She showed the picture to him, saying,

"France, if you let your parliament rule, they will cut off your head as the English did that of Charles I." However, the king was not easily persuaded; he held a bed of justice at Versailles, to force the parliament, but it protested; and Maupeou thought it so dangerous a measure that he dissolved the parliament, and established a royal commission.

Maupeou was looked on as the restorer of monarchy. A man, however, who had been harp-master to the princesses, had a law-suit, and the result not being equitable, wrote some memoirs against the Chancellor Goezmann, which were thought to be a chef d'œuvre of wit, and the parliament to which the Chancellor had attached so much importance, was ruined. His two colleagues also distinguished themselves. The Duke d'Aiguillon carried his infamy into office, and sold the interests of France to England, and allowed Poland, of which Choiseul had formed a rampart, to be dismembered. Terray did the same in finance; he reduced the rentes from five to two and a half per cent. While the ministers were thus irritating the people by their iniquities, the young mistress of the old king was covering the throne with ignominy, by the delirium of her folly, vices, and extravagance. Not thinking it sufficient to pollute Versailles, she built a pavilion at Marly, on which she spent six millions, and which was more magnificently furnished than Versailles.

This lasted five years; and when Louis XV. became exhausted by his excesses, Madame Dubarry,

to rouse him, took him to Trianon, where she had arranged a party of pleasure, after the idea of Madame du Pompadour. The king there took the small-pox, and was soon in extreme danger. He was carried to Versailles; and above fifty persons caught the infection, by only crossing the apartments. The physicians took every precaution, but the three princesses never left his room, night or day. On the 10th of May, 1774, death brought to a close this unhappy reign, which must ever be a blot on the history of France.

As soon as the king was dead, the château was deserted, for no one would remain on the infected spot. The corpse was hastily conveyed at night, with an escort of forty men from Versailles to Saint Dennis. It was in a state of putrefaction before it reached the tomb; and the putrescence of the dead body of Louis XV. was a fit type of his life.

CHAPTER XIV.

Louis XVI.—Marie Antoinette—Her amusements and imprudences—Affair of the diamond necklace—Cardinal de Rohan—Ministry of the Archbishop of Toulouse.

When Louis XVI. ascended the throne, he found the palace of Versailles disfigured by the alterations of his predecessor. This faithful representative of the monarchy, had been altered in the same ratio as monarchy itself. One important change brings on many others. The great staircase, called l'escalies des ambassadors, had been removed; it had formed the entrance of the court, and of the great monarchical ceremonies, but it was useless under a prince who considered his crown and majesty as an intolerable weight.

Louis XVI., in the beginning of his reign, wanted to efface from Versailles the marks with which it had been disgraced. He gave orders to his architect M. Micque, and asked how much

money, and how many years it would take to repair the palace: the artist demanded ten millions, and ten years. The king put it off till 1790, and said it would finish the century, but instead of being restored to its primitive grandeur, it was then ravished from him for ever. The king immediately commenced a reform in the state. He destroyed the shameful triumvirate of D'Aiguillou, Maupeon, and Terray; he dissolved the parliaments which the Chancellor had formed, and recalled the old ones; and named Maurepas minister, who was well acquainted with the former policy. But the most decisive choice was that of Turgot, the pupil of Quesnay, who carried into the administration the doctrine of the economists, and whose mind was equal to the present state of affairs, which he arranged with such decision that he surpassed the improvements achieved by forty years' revolutions and sacrifices. But his power did not last long; the intrigues of the court ruined his credit, and the king's weakness was so great, that he displaced him soon after having raised him. M. Necker succeeded, and attempted less radical reforms; but he was soon obliged to retire; and thus it was easily seen that the monarchy was equally incapable of satisfying or resisting the new spirit. Louis XVI., with the wish of being a good king, was simply a worthy man. Madame de Campan whose memoirs are a faithful recital of the last grandeurs of Versailles, has impartially drawn his portrait. He had tolerably noble features, an expression of melan-

choly, his carriage without dignity, his hair, whatever his coiffeur chose to make it, and soon disordered, from the little care he took of it. His voice, without being harsh, was not agreeable; and when he was animated in talking, it frequently became shrill. He was fond of study, understood English perfectly, and he was, unfortunately, too fond of the mechanical arts. He was so delighted with making locks, that he admitted a common smith into his society, and helped him to make locks, keys, bolts, &c., till his black hands obtained him some severe reproaches from the Queen.

In his youth, he was rough and cruel; but his disposition also evinced itself in some amusing ways. On the outside of his *smithy* apartment, overlooking all the grounds of Versailles, he had a veranda constructed, and there, concealed in a large arm chair, he observed with a telescope every thing that passed in the attics and gardens; and in the evening, before the Queen, used to take a malicious pleasure in embarrassing the courtiers by the recital of what he had seen. There was no occasion, however, to have thus played the spy, for, from the top of the palace he might have commanded the whole horizon, and the road to Paris, down which, a few years later, the people rushed in shoals to invade the asylum which Louis XIV. had thought inviolable.

He was married in 1770, to Marie Antoinette, daughter of Maria Theresa. We take the opportu-

nity of giving in the frontispiece a representation of the ceremony, comprehending a view of the magnificent chapel of the palace, to be described in a future chapter. The Duke de Choiseul looked upon this marriage as the bond of union of the new policy, as well as of his own continuance in power; but his credit did not long survive; and the Duchess of Austria, instead of preserving the throne of France, was the cause of its ruin.

The character of Marie Antoinette was a combination of Austrian pride, with the piquant graces of a French woman. Her beauty proclaimed her character: her smile was amiable, her eyes sweet in expression, but her head and shoulders were carried with pride. Trifling in her tastes, she was imperious in having them gratified. All her personal charms were for a long time without attraction for Louis XVI., whose dull and methodical habits could but ill assort with her liveliness. Neglected by the king during the first years of their reign, she wept in solitude, and then amused herself with follies, which from the beginning drew on her public curiosity and hatred. The court at that time displayed an air of enjoyment, which harmonized ill with the storms gathering around, and that were soon to burst forth. The Count de Provence cultivated literature, and the Count d'Artois was renowned for his gallantries; and Marie Antoinette threw herself into the world of pleasure congregated around

them as the king's brothers; but still making a selection of her own habitual associates. She did not receive them in her apartments, for this would have involved the observance of etiquette, but in those of the Princess Guemenée, superintendent of her household, and after her death, in those of the Countess Jules de Polignac, to whom she gave the appointment.

These intimacies were the occasion of many reports little to the queen's honour, who cared nothing for public opinion. She attended in disguise the balls at the opera, and very slightly escorted. One day she went in a hack, and herself spread the report of her presence; mixing among the masks, and imagining she was not recognized. The snow was very deep one winter, and she introduced sledges such as they use in the north of Europe; at first they were only used at Versailles, but then took longer drives, and at last went as far as the Champs Elysées. Some even entered Paris; and as the ladies who rode in them wore masks, it was always believed that the queen was among them.

During the queen's pregnancy, she remained at home all day, and only took the fresh air in the evening, with the princesses and her brothers, in the terrace of her apartments. The musicians of her chapel performed pieces of music in an orchestra constructed in the middle of the parterre. The terrace was lighted with variegated lamps from the

duke de Provence's rooms on the ground floor; the queen reclined on a sofa, or walked, mixing in the crowd which these nocturnal concerts attracted, and as the king did not appear at them, his absence gave rise to all kinds of observations. One night, the queen wanted to have a private concert within the inclosure, in which is the group of Pluto and Proserpine; and she went to the place with some of her intimates, the officers stationed at the entrance preventing all, but those having tickets, to enter. The public on this occasion demanded significantly the reason why they were not admitted as usual. Two queens had resided at Versailles before Marie Antoinette, who had made no noise, and were marked only for the obscurity to which they resigned themselves—Maria Theresa, under Louis XIV., and Marie Leckzinska, under Louis XV.—but while they were thus retired, successive favourites had drained the public credit by their extravagance, and corrupted morality by the unblushing example of their vices. At first, the nation expressed its resentment in satirical songs, but at last, its anger, which the shameful conduct of the king's mistresses had first awoke, burst on the devoted head of Marie Antoinette, who, like all distinguished victims of history, was worthy of a better fate.

Public attention once drawn to the queen, every thing was turned against her; and, as if there was not enough to blame in her private life, she was accused of ruining the state by her extravagance:

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but nothing proves that this was deserved. A court intrigue, which at that time furnished matter for dark suspicions against her, now that the details are better known, appears on the contrary, to proclaim her innocence. We speak of the famous affair of the necklace. Boehmer, jeweller to the crown, had collected the most beautiful diamonds, and made them into a magnificent necklace, valued at sixteen hundred thousand franks, which he expected to have sold to Madame Dubarry; but it was not finished till after the death of Louis XV., and the disgrace of his mistress. It was shown to the queen, but she refused to purchase it, as being too expensive, and she having a handsome one already. Boehmer was panic-struck by this refusal, when Madame la Comtesse de la Motte came to his assistance. She was descended from a good family, with no fortune but what she gained by her wits. She found out a way to purchase the necklace, and to engage a third party in the intrigue, who was one of the first persons in the kingdom, and whose large fortune was security for the amount at which it was valued.

She addressed herself to the Cardinal de Rohan, grand almoner to the queen, who on some account was out of favour, and insinuated that Marie Antoinette would restore him to her confidence, if he would become the mediator between her and the jeweller Boehmer, of whom she wanted to buy the necklace unknown to the king. The credulous car-

dinal believed this fable, and every trick was carried on to keep up the deceit—even by means of letters said to be from the queen,—and a meeting was fixed, and kept in one of the plantations of the park, with a person he took for her Majesty. Then quite relieved from every suspicion, he went to Boehmer's for the necklace, and carried it to Madame de la Motte; remaining concealed behind a glass door, till he saw a footman in the royal livery, who said on entering, "from the queen," when the case was given to him. The cardinal thought his favour was now unbounded—but the necklace disappeared, and was carried out of France. Sometime after, Boehmer went to Versailles for the money; but the queen refused to pay for what she had not bought, and had the Cardinal de Rohan arrested; when this prince of the church had to appear in court between Madame de la Motte and Cagliostro. But the queen's honour, and the majesty of the throne, lost much more than he did, by this celebrated law-suit.

For some time the queen had acquired the greatest power over the king, who had thrown off the yoke of Maurepas, only to stoop under that of a woman. The government, which had attempted a reform, had fallen back to the old principles of despotism. M. de Calonne, witty and depraved as a man, and prodigal and incapable as a minister, hastened the revolution. Not seeing any other means of saving the state, he advised the abolition of the

most obnoxious privileges, and called together at Versailles the Assembly of the notables. This measure caused his fall.

He was succeeded by the Archbishop of Toulouse, who belonged to another party. Descended from Marèchal de Léoménie, who, from his dungeon, in the sixteenth century, advocated reform, he maintained the spirit of innovation hereditary in his family. A philosopher and reformer, the friend of Voltaire, of Turgot, and of Necker, he only wanted talents equal to his reputation. He quarrelled with the parliament, and sent it to Versailles, where Louis XVI. held a bed of justice, to compel it to countenance reform, in the same room in which some years before Louis XV. had held one to force it to register abuses. But this show of power was ineffectual, and produced nothing that could content public opinion. M. Necker was recalled, and the states general assembled, which soon after carried away at one sweep the parliaments, the court, the nobility, and the monarchy.

CHAPTER XV.

English gardens—Temple of love—Swiss village—The grotto—The drama—Marriage de Figaro—Visit of the kings of Europe—Franklin at Versailles—American war.

It was among the verdant alleys of the Petit Trianon, that Marie Antoinette awaited the instant in which she was to expiate as a blood offering the faults and vices of the monarchy.

Louis XV. had begun the Petit Trianon, which he built close to the Grand Trianon, just as at Versailles, he had the small apartments built behind the great ones. Madame Dubarry had an apartment there, and there it was that the king was seized with the illness which caused his death.

When Louis XVI. ascended the throne, he gave the Petit Trianon to his wife, who reigned over it, and gave her orders in these terms:—"From the Queen." This gave great offence in Paris, it being the first time a queen had ever issued a public

The Bridal Tower

order during the king's life. But Marie Antoinette appeared much more anxious to forget in this delightful place her rank, than desirous of usurping the king's. Micque, the architect, had, by her orders, arranged every thing with the greatest simplicity; and the gardens were laid out in the English style. In the park at Versailles, every thing inspired the idea of monarchy and despotism; the forest-trees were bent in uniformity like a flock of slaves, at the will of their master. The trees in the park at Trianon, on the contrary, spread wide their various branches in all the rich luxuriance of nature free from the dominion of man. Nearly at the entrance of the park was a temple to love, this baneful god, to whom monarchy had sacrificed its treasures, its power, and its duration. Elegant columns supported the cupola, and protected the little god from the injuries of the weather. In the distance was seen the graceful winding of a lake, and on its banks a village scattered among the trees—there was the curate, the bailiff, the miller, and the milkmaid's cottage. Where had vanished the pomp of Louis XIV.? Where the imposing ceremonies of his court? After taking literature from England, France borrowed new manners from Switzerland; after the influence of Voltaire and Montesquieu, that of Rousseau was heard at court, and the hamlet at Trianon still remains to show, that the sentiments of the Savoyard vicar had penetrated the costly palace of Versailles.

to which were afterwards added those smaller rooms in which she confined the old age of the king; in short, she was queen in every thing but name. It was observed, as a remarkable trait in her character, that her eagerness in pursuing any object she desired to accomplish was only equalled by her calmness when she found its accomplishment impossible.

Not many years were required to change entirely the character of the king, and bring him from the extreme of licentiousness to the extreme of devotion. The transition was sudden enough to disclose the weakness of a mind which imagined itself immovable, and yet submitted with singular facility to the influence of any one who would take the trouble to govern it. It was odd, that female ambition should have thought of producing a change like this—from the voluptuary to the ascetic. The court, however, followed the example of the king. Gallantry had been the fashion when he was young and amorous; hypocrisy became the rule when he was old and devout. Even the palace, which still more than the court, was the image of Louis, reflected in some degree the change; and this inanimate flatterer set about its conversion, and began to raise up religion upon the ruins of voluptuousness.

Formerly, at the right angle of the central body of the building, and in the place where the northern wing was built, which they called the new wing, there was a wonderful fountain, the Grotto of

Tethys, some fragments of which are seen to-day in the grove near the Baths of Apollo. All the artists whom Louis had drawn about him, had laboured to adorn this beautiful object. Perrault had designed the architecture, and Lebrun the figures; and Girardon, the rival of Coysevox, had executed the principal group. In the middle of the sheets of water which spread themselves over coral and mother of pearl, Apollo was seen ministered to by the nymphs. La Fontaine has celebrated this admirable grotto in his verses, so that no one might be ignorant of the voluptuous idea which had presided over its construction—of the meaning of the symbols by which the palace associated itself with the youth of Louis XIV.

But, when Madame de Maintenon had brought the king to repentance and the practice of devotion, the palace demolished its licentious grotto, and constructed on the ruins the chapel which remains to this day. Much time was necessary before Louis could lavish upon it all his magnificence; and the works continued to go on from 1699 to 1710. In the time of his father the chapel of the château had been in the southern façade; and Louis changed it to the north, near to the site it occupies to-day, but without encroaching upon the Grotto of Tethys. It was not till his religious scruples were excited that he sacrificed this cherished grotto. In doing this, at last, he seemed to renounce for ever the sins of his youth; and the palace, like an accomplished

The king was present at all the performances; and Caillot, a celebrated actor, retired from the stage, was chosen to give lessons.

Whilst they were performing at Trianon, Beaumarchais brought out his "Marriage of Figaro," in which he displayed all the vices of his age, since the time of the Tartuffe. The French stage had never seen any thing so audacious. As the weakness of the king left the queen the most important person in the state, all the foreign princes were fêted at Trianon. Many kings during the last century had made a pilgrimage to Versailles, to render homage to Louis XIV., and his monument. The Czar Peter the Great, was the first during the regency. Christian III., King of Denmark, arrived in the reign of Louis XV., in 1763; and the King of Sweden, Gustavus III., in that of Louis XVI. Marie Antoinette received her brother, the emperor Joseph II.; who was well informed, simple in his manners, frank in his conversation, a reformer in his opinions, and who would not allow the great Frederick to be the only intellectual king. The queen gave him a fête—she had the garden illuminated with variegated lamps, which made it resemble fairy-land; and this was repeated for the Grand duke of Russia, afterwards Paul I.

But, in company with these sovereigns, there was, at Versailles, the representative of a liberal and rising republic. "Franklin appeared at court," says Madame de Campan, "in the costume of an

American; his hair straight, without powder, his round hat, his brown dress, contrasting oddly with the embroidered and glittering garb of the courtiers at Versailles. The novelty delighted all the French women: and the most elegant fêtes were given him. I assisted at one where the most beautiful woman out of three hundred was fixed on to place a crown of laurels on his white hair, and imprint two kisses on his venerable cheeks."

Franklin came to seek allies against England. His virtue incited the nobility; and the young Marquis de la Fayette devoted himself to a cause which threw over his whole future life a halo of glory.

The insurrection of America soon thundered at the gates of Versailles. On the 6th of October, 1789, the queen was walking alone at Trianon, and had given herself up to painful reflections, on the pleasures which had fallen one by one from her grasp, as the withering leaves around her. In the evening she received a note from M. de Saint Priest, who implored her to return to Versailles immediately; she did so, and still observed, as she passed through the park, the marks of destruction on the trees, already stripped by the cold winds. The monarchy was uncrowned like the park; for the people were already arriving in full tide, to pluck the sovereign power from the solitude in which Louis XIV. had established it.

CHAPTER XVI.

The States-General — The game of tennis — Mirabeau — Fourth of August — The banquet of the guards — Fifth of October — Invasion of the palace — The king leaves Versailles — The terror — General Hoche.

THE last hour had struck, and the power established by the great king was to pass away. Scarcely a century had elapsed between the period when, with all the pomp of despotism, Louis XIV. took possession of Versailles, and that in which Louis XVI. was torn from it by a nation in rebellion.

The palace of Versailles had not sufficiently expiated the pride of its first days by the ignominy of those which followed. Louis XIV. had erected it into a temple for his own idolatry; but Louis XV. had polluted the sanctuary. Louis XVI., an honest man, an enlightened prince, an incapable king, did not find means to save the monarchy, and applied to the nation. He assembled the States-General; but it was felt that much more important affairs than the arrangement of a few taxes would be agitated— it was felt that the tiers-etat which the Bourbons had

reduced to nothing, would now be all. Thus, the crown acknowledged its incompetency, and a power greater than its own.

The question, where they should be convoked, was discussed. The queen proposed a distance of sixty leagues from Paris; but Necker, who had returned in triumph to the ministry, determined that it should be at Versailles. The town had greatly increased during the last years of the reign of Louis XIV., and was inhabited by many of the nobility, who had built their hôtels near the palace. Under Louis XV. it had increased in the number of citizens, whom the luxuries of the court allured to reap their harvest. This town, hitherto the slave of the palace, was now to contain a power which rivalled royalty itself.

It was on the 4th of May that the king opened at Versailles, in the great hall, the meeting of the States-General. He appeared with the queen, for the last time, in regal magnificence. The tiers-etat, having obtained permission that its body should be as numerous as that of the clergy and nobility united, demanded that they should vote by heads. This, although a necessary consequence of the first concession, was refused; and it immediately declared that the nation resided in itself alone, and on the 17th of June, constituted itself into a national assembly. On the 20th, the deputies found the doors of the hall of meeting locked, and repaired to the tennis-court, where, before the president Bailey, they swore fidelity to each other, and determined

to meet every where, whenever circumstances demanded. This example was worthy of the brightest days of antiquity. The people regained, by a courageous act, the power which had been wrested from them. The Count D'Artois, who was at the head of the most obstinate in the assertion of their privileges, sent to the master of the room where the deputies were assembled, to say that he was going to play at tennis the next day; and this person, influenced by the court, informed them that he could no longer accommodate them. They assembled then in the church of Saint Louis, where fresh oaths were taken; and where they were joined by the greater part of the clergy. To prevent this fever of independence from spreading wider, the king held a solemn assembly in the presence of the Three States, and pronounced that all the deliberations from the 17th were void. He concluded in these words:—"I order you, gentlemen, to repair to-morrow morning each to the chamber of your own order, and take your seats."

The nobility, and part of the clergy obeyed; the rest remained in the hall. M. de Dreux-Brézé, master of the ceremonies, was about to repeat the orders, and enforce them on the refractory members, when a voice of thunder was heard in the assembly. It was that of Mirabeau, who seemed born to serve a new epoch with arms steeped in the previous corruption. He advanced to M. de Dreux-Brézé, and pronounced these memorable words:—Go, tell your master, that we are here by the will of the

people, and that we will only be dragged out by the bayonet." An instant after, the Abbé Sieyes rose and said, "We are to-day, what we were yesterday—let us consult." The assembly immediately declared, that it would hold by the deliberations it had taken; and in the face of the soldiers, who entered to clear the hall, decreed, that the persons of the deputies were inviolable, and that those who should offer them the least violence should be declared traitors to the nation, and guilty of a capital crime.

The court projected fresh enterprizes to get rid of these generous tribunes; but the insurrection of Paris, and the taking of the Bastille, saved the National Assembly. On the 15th July, the king went to the Assembly with his brothers, without suite or guards; and said, standing uncovered before them, "Gentlemen, you were afraid of me; well, I will confide in you." It was the abdication of monarchy. Louis XVI. returned on foot from the hall, the deputies following, and forming his suite. A woman approached the king, and asked him if he was really sincere in what he did. The people filled the courts of the castle. The king, the queen, and children appeared at the windows, but they heard words which showed that the public anger had not yet subsided.

On the ruins of the Bastille two institutions were erected in Paris; the Commune, and the National Guard. The National Assembly acknowledged them

immediately, and named Bailly as major of the Commune, and La Fayette, commandant of the National Guard. Monarchy itself was obliged to render homage to insurrection, in the place wherein it was crowned. The king went on July 16th, to the hôtel de ville, where Bailly, on receiving him gave him the keys of Paris, before offered to Henry IV., and said, "This good king conquered his people, to-day the people conquer their king." Then the king took the three coloured cockade, and fixed it in his hat. Louis XVI. carried back to Versailles that evening this sign of the people's victory; and the court saw plainly that the king had lost his throne without reconciling himself to the nation.

The Count d'Artois, the Prince de Condé, the family of Polignac, all of the queen's circle, hastened then to prepare for emigration. The whole of France leaped up, as if it had received an electric shock. The people rose on all sides, and burned the castles by which they had so long been governed.

A slight re-action appeared to take place, on the occasion of the officers just returned from Flanders giving a fête in the theatre of Versailles; but nothing could stop the course of destiny. Louis was compelled to accept the declaration of the Rights of Man, and an armed crowd burst into the palace. Nothing was heard but the cry, "The king to Paris!" Louis came to the balcony, and said, "My friends, I will go to Paris with my wife

and children, and I will confide all I hold precious to my faithful subjects." Their departure was fixed at one o'clock in the day; and as the National Assembly had declared that they were inseparable from the king, a deputation of a hundred members accompanied him to the capital. Some days after, the whole Assembly quitted Versailles, and established themselves at Paris, which was thenceforth its seat.

In the middle of so many violent passions, monarchy soon disappeared. After having vainly endeavoured to live during three years in a new sphere, it was attacked on the 10th of August, 1792, as it had been at Versailles on the 5th of October, 1789. The national convention was united in its overthrow, and then had the most difficult task ever given to a political assembly—that of forming a new power to replace the one overturned, and of defending at the same time the country invaded by the combined forces of all Europe. In this extreme danger, terror took the place of law; the scaffold devoured with frightful avidity all that Versailles had displayed of majesty and grandeur. The king and queen paved this bloody road at once for those whose advice had destroyed them, and for the friends who had vainly endeavoured to defend them; and when noble victims were wanted for the insatiable guillotine, republican ones were found to replace them. By maintaining terror within, the convention was

able to excite emulation on the frontiers; and by sacrificing internal enemies, it insured itself victory without. France had to withstand the combined strength of nations leagued against her. But it was no longer the pride of a king, nor the desire of adding a few acres of ground to her territory, which incited her to war: it was the sacred cause of modern civilization. The necessities of such a war must, soon or late, deliver the country up to a soldier; and, among those captains who could have aspired to the honour of supreme rule, was the son of poor parents from the faubourgs of Versailles. General Hoche, who commanded the armies of the republic at twenty-three years of age, and who, after conquering on the frontiers, was thought the only person capable of pacifying La Vendée, might have hoped one day to march into that palace as a master, under whose walls he had played as a child: but he died suddenly at the head of the army, who saw in him no more than a skilful general; and after his death, the star of Napoleon shone without a rival on the horizon.

CHAPTER XVII.

Louis Philippe—Re-arrangement of Versailles—Description of the Central part of the Palace.

When Louis Philippe first cast his eye upon Versailles, after his accession to the throne, he saw at once the impiety of allowing such a monument to sink into utter ruin. But how restore it? By a cold imitation of the taste of Louis XIV.? This would have made the palace a mere curiosity—an exhibition to be seen by the visitors of Paris after the collections of ancient armour, or other remains of ancestral times. He felt that the day of the great king had passed by; that the monarchical power was now in alliance with the popular power; and that the nation, in which both were combined, was the only paramount idea left by the revolution of July. Out of these speculations arose a noble, nay, a sublime thought. He determined

that the palace of Louis XIV., without losing its individuality, should become a palace of the entire people; and that the bygone spirit of absolutism should give shelter, as it were, to the spirit of modern liberty. Versailles, therefore, erected as a homage to individual pride, has become, under the Orleans regime, a great national monument—and certainly the most complete and splendid of its class in all Europe.

To carry out this idea, immense alterations were requisite in the interior of the palace. Numbers of small rooms were thrown into one; and the holes and corners of Versailles were visited with the light of day, which shamed, without banishing, their voluptuous associations. The temple of luxury was converted into a temple of the arts, and French valour recorded in immortal colours upon the walls, by French genius. The whole edifice is one vast museum. Every room is a gallery of pictures or statues; and there is still to be added a collection of national models. The pictures represent—

I. The great battles, from the commencement of the monarchy down to our own day.

II. The most remarkable events of French history.

III. The reigns of Louis XIV., XV., and XVI; the victories of the Republic; the campaigns of Napoleon; the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X.; the revolution of 1830, and the reign of Louis Philippe.

IV. A collection of portraits of the Kings of France, from Pharamond to Louis Philippe; of the great admirals, constables, and marshals; and of the distinguished warriors who did not hold these dignities.

V. A general gallery of portraits of the great men of all ages and nations, including kings, statesmen, warriors, magistrates, artists, and men of letters and science.

VI. The old castles of France.

VII. Marine pieces, representing some naval battles.

The sculptures consist of busts and statues from the earliest periods of the monarchy; and of the tombs of the royal families of France, formerly in the museum of the Petits Augustins, at Paris; with the images of kings, queens, and princes, moulded from the statues and busts in the vaults of Saint Denis and elsewhere. The extraordinary labours requisite to effect all this in a comparatively short time, were superintended by the king in person; who made as many journeys to Versailles for this purpose, as his predecessor Louis XIV. made to Trianon.

On entering the great court of the palace, we recognise at the bottom, in the mass of buildings, the old château of Louis XIII. This was originally flanked by a moat, but when Louis XIV. determined to make Versailles the seat of the court, the moat was filled up, and on the Paris side a gilded rail

substituted. The court thus formed was called the Cour Royale; but afterwards the horizontal rail was made semi-circular, and the place where the gate of entrance stood, is now marked by the equestrian statue of Louis.

To be allowed to enter this royal court, was a great privilege, and was only accorded to those who had attained the "honours of the Louvre," that is to say, who could hang upon their carriages a velvet stuff, emblazoned in the corners with their arms. All others were obliged to dismount at the gate, and approach the grand temple of royalty in sedan chairs.

On the left of the court, a groom of the wardrobe resided, whose business it was to announce the *lever* of the king; and this functionary was so tormented by the premature visits of the courtiers, that to save his window from their impatient taps, he fell upon the expedient of making a pack of cards answer their questions. The eight of clubs for instance, told that the king was to rise at eight o'clock, the ten of spades, that the lever was at ten, &c.; but afterwards, finding, no doubt, that some stupid persons misunderstood his hieroglyphics, he substituted a dial, with the hand pointing to the important hour, and was then able to sleep in peace.

From the Cour Royale, some steps led to a smaller and loftier court, which was called in the time of Louis XIV. the court of marble. Thus the king could not get into his carriage from the door

of his house, as we find in the "Merveilles Parlantes de Versailles:"

"Si le roi sort en carrosse, à cheval,
Son petit escalier donnant sur mon passage,
Il me traverse à pied; car à mon carrelage
Voitures ni chevaux n'ont jamais fait de mal.
On voit que son carrosse est à quelque distance
Du petit escalier de son appartement.
Ces cinq marches ici causent l'empêchement
Que le cocher plus près n'avance;
Et dans trente pas tout au plus
Que Louis à pied vient de faire,
Il rejoint sa voiture unie à l'ordinaire,
Et sans ornements superflus.
Il sort avec fort peu de suite;
Trente gardes au plus! l'escorte est bien petite;
Et le voilà parti pour aller prendre l'air,
Ce qu'il fait tous les jours, l'été comme l'hiver."

The little court was sometimes used as a stage for the performance of plays and exhibitions; and on one occasion it was the scene of a splendid supper. The Procession of the Virgin was also held here, a religious ceremony instituted when the kingdom, instead of being intrusted as formerly to Saint Michael, and before him to Saint Martin, was put under the protection of the queen of saints. The court of marble, however, is no longer a distinct tabular elevation. It has been levelled, and the outer and inner court thrown into one expanse, with the equestrian statue of Louis XIV. in the middle, and sixteen colossal statues around the sides, which a year or two ago incumbered, and seemed ready to crush, the bridge leading to the Chamber of Deputies.

Till the year 1789, the vestibule of the Stair of Marble was filled with little shops, where articles of fancy and luxury were sold to the court; but now the buyers and sellers have been scourged from the temple; and replaced by busts and statues of the men of genius of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Among these are Mansard and Le Notre, who created the palace and gardens of Versailles; Le Brun and Coysevox, who embellished them; La Fontaine and Boileau, who celebrated them; Racine, who charmed them with the harmony of his verses, and Molière, who amused them even at the expense of the courtiers themselves.

The private apartments of the king were on the first floor, just above the court of marble. They formed a portion of the old château of Louis XIII., who inhabited them; and afterwards Louis XIV. decorated them anew for his own use. Louis Philippe, with excellent taste, has filled them with pictures recalling the age of the latter king. The room in which Louis dined *en grand couvert*, is still hung with paintings, representing the history of Alexander the Great, the worthy of all others to whom he was ambitious of being compared. There is also a view of Versailles, in 1669, which is now a curiosity. When the king dined en grand couvert, the table was surrounded by balustrades, and the court admitted to see the royal animals feed. These animals consisted of the children and grandchildren of France; the rest even of the blood royal being

deemed unworthy of so high an honour. On the same floor of the central part of the building, are the small apartments of Marie Antoinette, where the unfortunate queen indulged her taste for society, unshackled by the ceremonial of a court. They were formerly occupied by Marie Lecksinska, who was fond of shutting herself up to paint with her needle, as is the fashion of the present day. It is asserted by ill-natured persons that the queen merely filled up the design drawn upon the cloth by her master—an easy mode of gaining a reputation, of which the nineteenth century is of course ignorant.

The Œil de Bœuf was the king's ante-chamber, where the courtiers assembled in the morning to see him rise upon the world. He is there still, fixed at once by tradition, and the pencil of Mignard, in the character of the Olympian Jove, surrounded by his family in the forms of other gods and goddesses!

Beyond the ante-chamber is the bed-chamber. The bed is handsome, but not gaudy, and a gilded balustrade which divides the room, appears to be not unnecessary, the space between the bed and the window being small. It was a high breach of etiquette to enter within this balustrade without being called even when the king was ill. The entire bed was originally covered with emblems representing the triumph of Venus; but Louis, in his devouter days, replaced them with the sacrifice of Abraham, and that of Iphigenia, worked by the ladies of Saint Cyr. Louis Philippe, however, in an

amusing spirit of satire, has restored some of the first decorations, and thus made his predecessor after his death return from the severe and elderly widow, into the arms of La Vallière and Montespan. The pictures are chiefly portraits of the family of Louis XIV.; but the ceiling is a master-piece of Paul Veronese, representing Jupiter and the Titans.

Near the fire-place there is a velvet cushion, on which the visitors imagine the great king was accustomed to kneel to a still greater. But its purpose was merely to hold a green silk bag, containing a shirt, a handkerchief, and a small sword; and this bag, on being removed from its place, if presented by the first valet de chambre to the first femme de chambre, indicated that it was Louis's intention to pass the night in his wife's apartments. Louis XV. had a stranger custom on these occasions. He sent a pincushion to Marie Lecksinska, with a black pin stuck in it, and if she added another, it was a sign that she accepted the visit. It was in this room Louis XIV. died, and it has not been used as a bed-chamber by any sovereign since.

The king's cabinet is next; but being much enlarged, can hardly be recognized as the small room where Louis transacted business with his ministers, and gave audience on so many memorable occasions; and where, in the reign of his successor, in full council, a wanton sitting on the arm of the king's chair, snatched up a packet of unopened letters, and threw them into the fire. There is in this room a

singular clock constructed in 1706 by an amateur. When the hour is going to strike, two cocks crow three times, flapping their wings, and a door opening, two figures come out, bearing tambourines on their arms, on which two cupids strike the quarters alternately with clubs. An equestrian figure of Louis XIV. then appears, and Victory, descending from a cloud, holds a crown over the head of the king. A tune is then rang by the bells, at the end of which the pageant disappears, and the hour strikes.

The bed-chamber of Louis XV. was originally a billiard room, where his predecessor played constantly. It was here Chamillart made his fortune by beating all the courtiers at the game, and allowing the king to beat him. After Louis had put his bed into this room, he was seized with the small pox, and neglected by every body but his daughters, who were too old to care much for the danger to their beauty. The king was at length given over by his physicians, who gave way to the priests, advising him not to stir when the latter came to administer extreme unction. Louis, however, as soon as the holy Viaticum appeared, carried by the grand almoner, rose up in his bed.

"What!" said he, in reply to the remonstrances of his first surgeon, "when God pays a miserable creature like me the honour of a visit, must I not get up to receive him?" At this moment the

Œil-de-bœuf was full of courtiers, and the palace crowded with people drawn by interest or curiosity to the spot. The dauphin had determined to set out for Paris the instant the breath was out of his father's body, and all was prepared. It was arranged that a signal of the event should be made to the attendants from the bed-room; and all fixed their eyes with intense expectation upon the window, where a lamp was burning. The lamp was extinguished; and at the instant the whole cavalcade without leaped into their saddles. Within, the noise and uproar was deafening. It seemed as if a thunder-bolt had fallen into the palace at the moment of the king's death, and was rolling through the rooms. This extraordinary noise was caused by the simultaneous rush made by the courtiers from the ante-chamber of the dead prince, to go to pay their court to Louis XVI.; and in this manner he was informed that he had lost a father, and gained a crown.

In a few minutes the palace was deserted; for there was no occasion now to brave the small pox. On leaving the bed-chamber, the duke de Villequier ordered the first surgeon to open the body.

"I shall willingly perform the duty of my office," replied the other, "if you will yours—which is to hold the head." The duke left the palace without replying. Some under servants and workmen put the pestiferous corpse into a coffin, and then mount-

ing it in a hunting carriage, sent it off post haste to Saint Denis, to be committed to the tombs of the kings of France.

The Salon des Pendules, distinguished by a magnificent clock seven feet high, was used for the council when the king did not invite his ministers into his cabinet. Next to this is the cabinet des chasses. A stair leads to the court of marble, at the bottom of which Damiens stabbed Louis XV. with a pen-knife. In one of the opposite rooms, this king had a chemical laboratory, where he used to make coffee and chocolate, no doubt on scientific principles, for his mistress Dubarry. Louis XVI., on the other hand, was a cabinet maker and locksmith, and several works of his of this kind are still extant.

Madame de Maintenon's lodgings were in this part of the palace; but so many changes were made by Louis XV., that it is no longer possible to point out the exact spot occupied by that cabinet which became the centre of the government. The salle de déjeûner, however, formed a portion of her apartments, where Louis XVI. breakfasted, and fed his four favourite dogs. These dogs he was in the habit of sending in a carriage to the hunting ground, for fear of fatiguing them too much.

The Confessional recalls the *religious* character of Louis XIV., and the curious circumstance of the captain of the guards always standing near, sword in hand, when the King was on his knees. His post was behind a glass (not a mirror) by means of

which, without actually being in the confessional, he could keep to the letter of his duty—never to lose sight of the King. In this apartment, there is a portrait of Madame de Maintenon, with a daughter of Louis and Madame de Montespan in her arms.

The small apartments of Louis XIV. ended on the court of marble with his dining-room, converted afterwards by Louis XVI. into a private cabinet, where he kept his papers. The former was very fond of good eating, and especially of plenty to eat. He did not like game, nor tea, nor coffee, nor chocolate, nor liqueurs—but nothing else came amiss. He drank champaigne like water, and for some time nothing but champaigne; till at length he was persuaded by his physicians to give it up, and substitute old Burgundy. His wine was iced in all seasons; he ate several kinds of soup, both in the morning and evening; and every day he devoured a basket of fruit and pastry. It was in this room that Louis made Molière sit at table with him, and helped him with his own hands to the wing of a fowl.

The great staircase, and the gallery Mignard, in this part of the building, were replaced by two salles de la vaisselle d'or, a salon des porcelains, a library, and a small salle à manger. The two first were used to keep the King's gold plate; and near these there was a cabinet de la cassette, where Louis XV., while he dissipated the means of the

state, hoarded carefully a private treasure. He sometimes tried to turn the penny as a private speculator, under the name of Louis de Bourbon; but, after all, his savings were savings to the state, since he paid out of these the expenses of his mistresses and bastards.

The library is not yet finished. Louis Philippe intends it to contain a collection of every thing touching upon the history of France and of her great men. The famous Red Book was found in a closet of this room, where Louis XVI. had shut it up by means of a lock of his own invention. The cabinet of medals is now the salle des gouaches (water colour drawings) of Louis XV. and XVI. It was here Madame de Pompadour, to amuse Louis XV., got up a play, performed by the courtiers, and composed by Voltaire. She persuaded the King, who had no affection for Voltaire, to applaud; and the philosopher was so transported at the honour, that his muse broke forth in this eloquent rhapsody—

"Ainsi donc vous réunissez
Tous les arts, tous les dons de plaire,
Pompadour! Vous embellissez
La cour, le Parnasse et Cythère.
Charme de tous les yeux, trésor d'un seul mortel!
Que votre amour soit éternel!
Que tous vos jours soient marqués par des fêtes!
Que de nouveaux succès marquent ceux de Louis!
Vivez tous deux sans ennemis,
Et gardez tous deux vos conquêtes!"

The Salle des Croisades is extremely interesting from the paintings, from which it has derived its name, placed there by Louis Philippe. Still more interesting, and from a similar cause, is the salle des états généraux. The Salon d'Hercule, formerly the chapel, is distinguished by a painting of the apotheosis of Hercules, by Lemoine. The painter, it is said, was so sanguine of this work placing himself at once in the position of Lebrun, that when he found it excited no attention at the court of Louis XV., he went mad and destroyed himself.

The Great Apartments, like the last, all derive their names from the paintings on the ceiling. Generally speaking, they are massive and gorgeous in appearance, richly gilded, with heavy cornices, and walls of beautiful marble. The salon de l'Abundance—de Venus—de Diane—de Mars—de Mercure—d'Apollon—de la Guerre, are all of this description, but all different from each other, and all covered with pictures. The salon d'Apollon was formerly the salle du Trone, where Louis XIV. received the submission of the doge of Genoa, the ambassadors of Siam, and the deputies of Algiers. For this reason, the paintings have all some relation to the reign of this monarch.

The grande galerie des glaces, of which an accurate idea may be formed from the accompanying plate, is 222 feet long, by 32 wide, and 40 high. On the left hand (in the engraving) are seventeen large windows, looking into the gardens,

E. Mackenzie. E. Mackenzie

Gallery of Mirrors

Versailles.

London. Published for the Proprietors by Longman & C°. Paternoster Row.

LIBRARY OF THE BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

and on the right seventeen mirrors exactly corresponding in size.

The ceiling, painted by Le Brun, contains nine great pictures, representing the glories of Louis XIV. Under these historical glories, he himself reflected them, as it were, in entertainments so splendid as to eclipse every thing else of the kind. At one ball, given on the occasion of the marriage of the Duke of Burgundy with Adelaide of Savoy, the gallery was lighted up with four thousand wax candles, which, by means of the mirrored walls, must have had the effect of forty thousand. The ladies were dressed in black velvet, and both sexes sparkled with brilliants. The collation which followed the dancing, although in the midst of winter, was set out upon moving tables, imitating parterres of flowers, and containing all the luxuries both of spring and autumn. On another occasion, Louis transported his throne into the gallery of mirrors, and received there the Persian ambassador, in order to show him that a king of France could equal the magnificence of the east.

The Salon de la paix was formerly the queen's salon du jou. Louis XIV., like most of the French sovereigns, was fond of play. When he visited, with his court, one of the royal residences, he usually gave a purse of gold to the queen, the princesses, and the ladies, for a bank to each; and, when Mademoiselle de Fontanges made her first journey to Fontainbleau, she found in the splendid

carriage provided for her, and drawn by eight horses, ten thousand golden louis, or £8000 sterling. Madame de Montespan was so distractedly fond of play, that she lost on one occasion four hundred thousand pistoles at hazard; but she persuaded the court banker to pay the debt for her; and the poor man was ruined, because he did not dare to refuse the King's mistress. There was much cheating in these royal games; and Louis detected one of his courtiers trying to victimize himself. A quarrel at play, in the time of Louis XV., was the cause of a duel, in which the Prince de Dombes killed the Marquis de Coigny. They set out for the field as soon as the queen's game was over, and, arriving at day-break, engaged in the fatal encounter at a spot which has been called ever since the Point du jour.

The Chambre à coucher de la reine was occupied by three queens, Maria Theresa, Marie Leckzinski, and Marie Antoinette. Louis XV. was born here, and his mother, the duchess of Burgundy, died in the same bed. In the salon de la reine, the queen's parties were held, which so much disgusted Louis at last, because he could not find any one to preside with fitting dignity. The ceiling is painted by Michel Corneille, and the apartment contains besides some interesting portraits.

The salon du grand couvert de la reine was the scene of nearly as much ceremony as that of the King. Marie Antoinette, as Madame Campan tells us, observed this fatiguing custom; and each sepa-

rate part of the family dined in public. The door-keepers allowed every one decently clothed to go in, and it became a great show for the provincials to see the dauphiness eat her soup, and then run to look at the princes devouring their bouilli, and still to be in time to catch the ladies of honour at their dessert. The ceiling is by Paul Veronese; and there are also some good pictures added by Louis Philippe.

Passing through the beautiful salle des gardes de la reine, the ceiling of which is painted by Noel Coypel, we reach the salle du sacre, formerly the grande salle des gardes. Here are some of David's great pieces which Napoleon thought would be too large for any of his palaces; together with two portraits of the man of destiny himself, and a ceiling full of the military glory of France. The salle de 1792, formerly the salle des cent Suisses, is another apartment of the same character, containing numerous portraits, besides other pictures, by Horace Vernet. The eight salles des gouaches (water colour paintings), and the four salles des campagnes de 1793, 4, and 5, explained by their names, complete the survey of this part of the palace.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Central part of the palace continued—Description of the north wing—Of the south wing—Of the gardens.

The ground floor must be considered a mere museum of works of art, affording in itself no striking specimen of the architecture of Versailles. The Vestibules contain statues of Descartes, Poussin, Corneille, and Voltaire. You then enter the salle des amiraux, containing the portraits of all the admirals of France, in number sixty-three, from the year 1270 to 1814. This apartment, and some of the others beyond, were occupied by the dauphin, son of Louis XIV., till his death in 1711. This prince was one day wolf-hunting, and had wandered to a considerable distance from Versailles, in company with the grand prior, when they were overtaken by the night. They reached the house of a

poor parish priest; and after having partaken of a munificent hospitality which included nothing less than a leg of mutton, they disappeared in the morning without saying a word to their host. The next day he was sent for by the king, and interrogated sternly as to the character of the company he was in the habit of entertaining at night. The good curé confessed the delinquency of lodging on that one occasion *thieves;* and when the dauphin and grand prior were brought before him, he identified his men, to the great amusement of the court. The king ultimately settled a pension on him of five hundred crowns a year.

The salles des maréchaux, interrupted by the galerie de Louis XIII., are next. This gallery, taking the place of a confused crowd of small rooms, is one of the greatest improvements of Louis Philippe. It is ornamented with statues and pictures. The salles des marechaux contain in all two hundred and ninety nine portraits, the number of the marshals of France down to our own day.

The two salles des guerriers celébres were formerly a portion of the apartments of Madame de Montespan. One evening, a famous accoucheur of Paris, called Clement, accustomed to such adventures, was brought into one of these apartments blindfold. A man concealed behind the bed curtains told him not to be afraid.

"I am afraid of nothing," replied Clement, "but of being in the house of God where they have

nothing either to eat or drink." They brought him bread and jelly, and then, at his request, some wine, of which he drank several bumpers in quick succession.

"And you?" said he to the man behind the curtain—"will you not take a glass also? You must drink the lady's health, if you wish her quickly and safely delivered." Louis XIV. was not slow in complying; and after Madame de Montespan had brought her child into the world, Clement was dismissed, blindfold as he came, with a purse of a hundred louis in his hand. In these apartments are the portraits of those celebrated warriors, who never received the titles of admiral, constable, or marshal.

The vestibule de Louis XV. is entirely new, and contains the salle des marines, which is not yet completely furnished with naval pieces. The salle des rois de France is also new, and exhibits the portraits of the seventy-two kings of France. The salle du vieux chateau closes the rez de chaussée of the central building.

Notwithstanding all the additions made by Mansard to the old chateâu of Louis XV., Versailles was not large enough, and the north and south wings were successively constructed. We shall commence with the former, although the later of the two in point of date. On the ground floor, the galerie de l'histoire de France, consisting of eleven apartments, contains a series of historical

pictures from Clovis receiving baptism to the battle of Lawfeldt, and La Perouse receiving his instructions from Louis XVI. The galerie des statues et tombeaux des rois de France, is described by its name.

On the first floor is the chapel, the third erected at Versailles, of which we have already taken some notice. Many great marriages, as well as that of Marie Antoinette, took place here; but the one which excited most sensation was probably that of the Duke of Orleans to the daughter of the Duke de Perthievre, at which on the bridegroom being told that he stood on the wrong side, instead of walking gravely round with the decorum befitting so serious a ceremony, he skipped irreligiously across the bride's train! The chapel is 135 feet in external length; sixty-nine feet in width, and seventy-nine feet in height. Marble, gilding, sculpture, statues, pictures, all conspire to give it an appearance of grandeur. Even the revolution respected this sacred monument; and Louis Philippe had nothing more to do than to restore the gilding, and endow it with the necessary paraphernalia. He has added, also, two marble statues of Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., one at each side of the master altar, in the act of putting France under the protection of the Virgin.

The second galerie de l'histoire de France, is a suite of apartments adorned with historical paintings of considerable value. One of these is the pestilence

of Jaffa, and another, Napoleon in the camp of Boulogne, throwing sheep's eyes at the English coast. But a bare list of the pictures in this wonderful palace would fill an entire volume like this.

The second galerie des statues et tombeaux des rois de France, resembles the first in purpose; but it contains what may be reckoned a curiosity in art—a statue sculptured by the hand of a young princess, and yet able to contend with, and even surpass, the productions of professional chisels around it. This is the statue of Joan of Arc, by the Princess Marie, daughter of Louis Philippe. It is the second on the right hand from the foreground, in the accompanying engraving, with the hands crossed upon the bosom. We can imagine the proud feeling of the royal father, when he placed this unquestionable evidence of genius in the museum of the arts, intellect, and glory of his country!

The galeries des portraits jusqu'en 1792, contain a great part of the mighty collection which graces the walls of Versailles. To particularize these pieces is of course out of the question here; but it may be mentioned, that there are some so really curious as to merit in an especial manner, the attention of travellers. Among them is the family of the Ursins, supposed to have been painted in the middle of the fifteenth century. A portrait of Charles XII. has the following curious inscription:—"This is the only portrait which Charles XII., of glorious memory, King of Sweden, ever permitted any painter

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Second Gallery of Busts, Statues & Tombs.

Palace of Versailles.

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to take of him after his ascension to the crown. It may be conjectured that he repented of having given even this permission; for, when the painting was finished, he cut the face with a pen-knife. It has been attempted, however, to restore it, the artist having had the honour to serve this great monarch in the capacity of his painter; and being the only one who has it in his power to give to posterity his real features, in the present portrait, which I made at Lund, in Scania, in the year 1718, the same year that this hero was killed at the siege of Fredricshall, in Norway: to which I am proud of subscribing my name.

DAVID VON GRAFT."

There is also the portrait of the Tsar Paul, which Napoleon affected, through particular admiration, to place behind the curtain of his bed; taking care that the anecdote should reach the ears of the imperial lunatic, whom he wished to detach from the English alliance. The trick was successful—with what result is known to history.

The only remaining apartment in this wing is the theatre, la salle de l'opera. We have seen that Louis XIV., although a passionate admirer of the stage, contented himself with temporary erections, such as the one for the representation of the Princess d'Elide. Louis, indeed, performed himself, and danced in the ballets before the court; till the lines in Britannicus appeared, which, wounding his pride too deeply to be forgiven, corrected his vanity:

"Il excelle à conduire un char dans la carrière,
A disputer des prix indignes de ses mains,
A se donner lui-même en spectacle aux Romains,
A venir prodiguer sa voix sur un théâtre,
A réciter des chants qu'il veut qu'on idolâtre."

Louis XV. constructed a theatre for Madame de Pompadour, who was fond of such amusements, but no trace of it is left; and afterwards a salle d'opera, which was finished in 1770, and opened in honour of the marriage of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette. At the birth of the dauphin, the body guards gave a ball in this apartment; the queen opening it with a private guardsman. On the 17th May, 1837, another fête was given here; at which Louis Philippe, who had repaired the injuries of the revolution, and restored the theatre to its original magnificence, appeared in the midst of his family. The accompanying engraving conveys an accurate idea of the place.

In the south wing, the labours of Louis Philippe are still more evident than in the other compartments of the palace. The galerie Napoleon, formerly the apartments of various members of the royal family, consists of twelve rooms, filled with pictures, which, in the whole, present a complete history of the emperor.

The galerie de sculpture, built of stone, and floored with marble, occupies the place of dirty corridors, which were a disgrace to the palace. It contains statues and busts of celebrated generals,

Theatre in the Palace of Versailles.

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Gallery of Battles

the former placed in niches, and the latter before the pilasters.

On the first floor of this wing, the grande galerie des Batailles was constructed in 1836, by Louis Philippe, on the site of the apartments formerly occupied by the Count d'Artois. It is dedicated, as its name implies, to the military glory of the nation, representing on the panels of the walls all the great battles of the French, from Tolbiac under Clovis, to Wagram under Napoleon. But the annexed engraving will give a better idea of the place than the most elaborate description.

The salle de 1830 is a splendid hall, formed by Louis Philippe out of the apartments of his grandfather Louis Philippe d'Orleans.[1] It is filled with pictures representing the occurrences of the memorable "days of July."

Another galerie de sculpture, also erected by Louis Philippe, resembles the one on the rez de chaussée. It is called also the gallery of Louis XIV., because that monarch figures pre-eminently among the statues, surrounded by the great men of his age. Besides these galleries and salles, there are two great galleries, formed out of ninety-eight apartments, large and small, which are to contain a collection of portraits from 1790 till the present day.

Having thus thrown a brief glance at the interior of the palace, it only remains to say a word respecting the gardens. They are true fairy-land;

but of that epoch when fairies wore hooped petticoats, and presented their god-daughters with coaches and six, with six footmen clinging behind. Shady walks, and melancholy groves, are mingled with open promenades, sheets of glancing water, flights of marble steps, statues, groups, and fountains in interminable variety. But there is no attempt at the wilderness style. Nature is never suffered to appear but in a civilized attitude. She has been granted the entrée by Louis XIV., and wears the court livery. Notwithstanding all the English prejudices, this is perhaps the best arrangement for a *palace* garden: at least no one dreams, in wandering through the enchanted walks of Versailles, that there is any thing incongruous with the palace in their straight lines, and well drilled alleys.

The view from the top of the steps above the basin of Latona is perhaps the most striking of the whole; for, independently of the usual characteristics of these gardens, the eye is carried to a great distance along the water-vista, and loses itself in the foliage beyond. Ranks of tall pale statues guard the avenue; and, notwithstanding the vases of flowers, and boxes of orange trees scattered around, it is possible to conceive that, in silence and solitude, there may be something absolutely *awful* in the artificial beauty of the scene.

The bains de Diane, under the fontaine de la pyramide, are a beautiful little square basin, orna-

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mented with a bas relief in gilded bronze, representing Diana and her nymphs. On the east side is a statue of Bacchus; on the west, of Anger. From this you enter a line of jets d'eau, spouting right and left, called the allée d'eau, and by an almost insensible descent, reach the bassin du dragon, and the bassin de Neptune. The former basin is distinguished by a column of water rising from the throat of a dragon to the height of eighty-five feet; but the latter is the chef d'œuvre, both of water and marble, and is the chief object of attraction in the gardens.

The twenty-two great leaden vases, carved in bas relief, fling up jets of water to a great height, which fall with a ceaseless splash into the canal; while, at the same time, twenty-three answering jets arise from the canal itself. Each vase, in the meantime, sends forth two streams from its sides; while immense groups of sea monsters dart torrents of water horizontally towards each other. The principal group, from which the basin takes its name, is that of Neptune and Amphitrite; with their cortège of nymphs, tritons, and marine monsters. The god is seated on a shell, and behind him some nondescript animal spouts a whole river from his jaws. Proteus, Oceanus, and Dragons conquered by love, all form separate groups; and all send forth streams of water, great or small, dashing, splashing, hissing, gurgling, and murmuring around. There are numerous other basins, all

more or less deserving of attention; but the statues and vases are innumerable.

It has been mentioned, that Louis XIV. wrote an itinerary for the use of visitors, who had no doubt annoyed him by seeing his palace the wrong way. This document has been lately found in a manuscript in the Bibliotheque Royale, and is curious of its kind. The great king, it seems, had not paid much attention to such small things as orthography; as is proved by various words that occur in the itinerary; such as Sfinx, Baccus, void (voit), Latonne (Latone), royalle, Seres (Ceres), isle (ile), costè du labirinte, gallerie, collonade, ensuitte, collones, dessendra, &c. The quaint minuteness of the king approaches the ridiculous:

"14. The visitor will go to the baths of Apollo, and consider them, as well as the fountain and the rails; and after having made the tour, he will go to Flora."

"19. He will afterwards pass by Ceres to go to the theatre, and will see the changes, and consider the jets of the cascades."

"24. He will go out by the dragon, and pass by the alley of children; and on arriving at a stone which is between the two basins below, he will turn round to take a peep at all the jets of Neptune and the dragon, and then continue to ascend by the said abbey."

John Haddon, Castle Street, Finsbury.

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